

## **Introduction to the Revelation**

*(Originally Published in the Testimony Magazine – Bro. Geoff Cave)*

The book of Revelation is the pinnacle of the prophetic word of God. There are blessings promised for those who strive to understand its message; this is stated in ch.1:3. The purpose of this series, as the title implies, is not to probe every detail of the prophecy, but rather to give a framework intended to help in an understanding of the overall structure of the book. Once the overall picture is grasped, it becomes easier to fit the details together. It is very unlikely that anyone would be able to grasp the complexities of the Apocalypse by simply 'doing the readings' (important though this is); specific and prayerful effort is required, and this effort is rewarded.

### **The blessing**

The purpose of trying to understand Revelation is not simply to 'gain knowledge' and thereby feel superior to those who do not understand. Understanding the Word of God should produce humility, not pride. The Old Testament prophet, Daniel, shows why a keen desire to know more of God's purpose is important. It was because Daniel always wished to know more of God's will and purpose, that these things were 'revealed' to him. To give one example from the 9th chapter of his prophecy (vs.22-23), Gabriel speaks to Daniel "O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision." What greater blessing could there be? Not only was God's purpose revealed to Daniel, he was also called "greatly beloved" of the Lord. The converse of a keen desire to know and understand is indifference; surely this amounts to insulting the One who knows the end from the beginning, and He who wishes to impart his plan to those who "have ears to hear". The apostle John in Patmos shared Daniel's inquisitive nature in the Word of God. At the beginning of the vision, future events were sealed and no man was worthy to unloose the seals. This resulted in John weeping much. If our desire to know and understand is similar, we too shall be blessed.

### **History**

Although the Word of God is of vital importance to the believer today, it is also true to say that the vast majority of the Scripture relates either to the past which is history, or to the future which is prophecy. It must follow therefore that a certain amount of historical knowledge is necessary to gain a fuller understanding of Scripture. The majority of the Old Testament is history relating to Israel and its neighbours; the historical facts are often given in the inspired Word. The book of Daniel is different; here are details concerning Gentile nations and powers who affect either Israel or the saints from the time of Daniel through to the establishment of the kingdom. To understand these prophecies, there is a greater need to examine history using sources other than the Bible. Daniel's last prophecy for example means very little unless it is compared with the history of the times to which it relates. Once this is done the prophecy comes to life to show "that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will". The book of Daniel is the key to understanding the apocalypse.

In this series the principle book used to verify the historical accuracy of the interpretation will be the "Chronicle of the World" published by Longman Group UK Ltd and Chronicle

Communications Ltd. (ISBN: 0-582-05884-8) This book does not give great detail of any event in history, but it does provide a very easy method of finding some detail on tens of thousands of events. This can be done either by looking up the date or the name of a person/place etc. Any reader who is not familiar with the history of Europe & the Middle East and does not enjoy reading long chapters from history books is encouraged to purchase the Chronicle of the World. It is a large volume but well worth the £20 - £30. This book is not inspired, but it does deal with well documented historical evidence with the exception of the first section. (ie Evolution of humans).

## The Chart

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE APOCALYPSE

#### 7 KINGDOM VISIONS

\*Multitudinous Christ(1:12-18)  
\*Throne in Heaven (4:1-11)

\*White Robed Multitude(7:9-17)

\*Angel with Rainbow (10:1-11)  
\*Lamb on Mt. Zion (14:1-7)

Marriage of the Lamb(19:7)\*  
New Jerusalem (Ch.21) \*

**7 SEALS** Judgment on Pagan Rome (Red Dragon) Rev.12      **7 TRUMPETS** Judgment on Catholic Rome (Sea Beast) Rev.13      **7 VIALS** Judgment on Papal Rome (Earth Beast)Rev.16

INTERNAL EVENTS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE						WESTERN EMPIRE			EASTERN EMPIRE			ON BEAST SYSTEM (WEST) (EAST)						
1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(6:1) Peace	(6:3) Civil War	(6:5) Famine	(6:7) Death	(6:9) Persecution	(6:12) Paganism O'thrown	(8:7) Goths Invade	(8:8) Vandals Invade	(8:10) Huns Invade	(8:12) Political Eclipse	(9:1) Saracens Invade	(9:13) Turks Invade	(16:2) French Rev'n	(16:3) British Invade	(16:4) Napoleon Invades	(16:8) Royalty Eclipsed	(16:1) Civil	(16:12) Demise of	(16:17) "it is done"
White Horse A.D.96	Red Horse 180	Black Horse 211	Pale Horse 235	Souls under Alter 303	Earth-Quake 312	Hail & Fire 395	Burning Mountain 429	Star Falls 450	Sun & moon dark 476	Locusts 1st Woe 632	Angels on Earth 2nd Woe 1062	Vial on Earth 1793	On Sea 1794	On Rivers 1795	On Sun 1805	On Beast 1809	On Eugh-rates 1820	Seven Thunders 7777
						7 <sup>th</sup> Lasts			SEAL to the			(7 <sup>TH</sup> TRUMPET OR 3RD WOE 11:15)						

Earthquake Ch.6:12  
(Paganism removed from political heaven)

Earthquake Ch.11:13  
French Revolution

Earthquake Ch.16:18  
Judgment on Babylon

7 ECCLESIAS Ch.2 & 3

-- A Faithful Remnant

312 SAINTS WITNESS 42 MONTHS Ch.11:2

1572

Revival of the Truth

Political death of witnesses 105 years--N

Political ascension Ch.11:12

426 EARTH & WOMAN WITNESS 1260 days Ch.11:3

1686

GREAT RED DRAGON (Imperial Pagan Rome) Ch.12:3[10 horns]

DRAGON - Now imperial Emperor in east at Constantinople

DRAGON - Now the turks in Constantinople/Istanbul

DRAGON-Russia - Ch.16:13

2 Legs of image (Dan.2)

SEA BEAST(Barbarian kingdoms /Papacy[10 horns crowned] 450 ch.13:1

800

EARTH BEAST Emperor in Vienna/ Pope in Rome)[2 horns]Holy Roman E 800 Ch.13:11

1800

SCARLET BEAST & WHORE (Europe/Rome Ch.16:13 & 17:3 [10 horns])

325 Papal Growth

610 IMAGE OF BEAST (Papacy) Ch.13:14

FALSE PROPHET Ch.16:13

This is an attempt to show how the various sections of the book fit together and relate to each other. It begins on the left hand side at the end of the first century AD and concludes on the right with events immediately before the establishment of the kingdom. The seven visions relating to the kingdom shown at the top of the chart are so placed because of the time they were given in relation to the other events. Eg. After seeing the seals unfolded John was given a vision of the kingdom in the form of a white robed multitude; after seeing the events of the trumpets he saw a vision of the kingdom in the form of an angel with a rainbow, and so on. These kingdom visions would strengthen both John and all who read through the prophecy. They often form an introduction to the next section of the prophecy using the principle seen elsewhere in scripture. A vision of future glory is given which is followed by events which proceed it. ie First the result is given (the kingdom), then the method by which that result is achieved (events leading up to the kingdom).

The centre section of the chart shows the seals, trumpets and vials. It is here much of the detail is given in symbol. The events of the seal period result in judgment on Pagan Rome: while the

events of the trumpet period result in judgment on Catholic or the universal Roman empire which embraced a number of other nations or tribes. (Not to be confused with the Roman Catholic Church). The vial period brings judgment on Papal Rome.

Moving down the chart below the seals and trumpets etc three great earthquakes can be seen. Other minor earthquakes are mentioned, but just three great earthquakes representing massive political upheavals. The first occurs at the end of the seal period, the second at the end of the trumpet period and the third at the end of the vials. The lower part of the chart shows roughly how the witnessing against false Christianity and the beasts relate historically to the seals/trumpets etc.

### **When was the vision given?**

The vision was given to the Apostle John towards the end of the first century AD. John was banished to the isle of Patmos and was suffering persecution because of his witness for Christ. (ch.1:9) Around AD 96 seems the most probable date; this was during the persecution imposed by the emperor Domitian. Early writers in the second century agree with this date as does 'The Chronicle'. On page 223 it states *A devastating attack on Rome and a rallying cry to the worlds Christian community have emerged from the Aegean island of Patmos..... John who was exiled to Patmos by the Roman emperor Domitian as part of a general attack on Christianity, has written an Apocalypse, or book of prophecies.*

This raises the point that the prophecy is not about the nation of Israel, for it did not exist. Remember it was to show John things "which must shortly come to pass". Early in the prophecy comes the letters to the ecclesias with the specific exhortation and warnings for each. Here is a key to indicate who the prophecy was for; believers in the first century and beyond. This is exactly what the first verse of the prophecy states. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants...." Historical evidence does exist to show that believers from the first century and onwards have seen the Apocalypse as a progressive unfolding of the divine purpose. In their contending "for the faith once delivered unto the saints" the apocalypse with it's visions of future glory would have been a comfort on one hand; and a warning against accepting the teachings and practices of Rome on the other. This also applies today.

The refrain in the letters to the churches applies equally to ourselves "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches". There is always exhortation in prophecy. This prophecy is unique; it is the last message of the risen Lord to his ecclesia. In it he warns us to prepare for his coming, to be separate from those "which say they are apostles, and are not" (Ch.2:2) so that we may be part of his redeemed bride. We all need to understand this invitation. In subsequent articles we shall attempt to do this.

# **GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE APOCALYPSE**

## **Section 1 - Christ & the Ecclesias - Chapters 1 - 5**

- Ch. 1 Vision of Multitudinous Christ
- Chs.2,3 Christ's letters to the Ecclesias.
- Chs.4,5 Christ's purpose with the Ecclesias.

## **Section 2 - Political developments in the Roman Empire - Chapters 6 - 11**

- Ch.6, Pagan Roman Empire turns nominally 'Christian' (7 Seals)
- Ch.. 7 Kingdom Vision (White Robed Multitude)
- Chs.8,9 Break-up of the Roman Empire (7 Trumpets)
- Ch.10 Kingdom Vision (Angel with Rainbow)
- Chs.11 Protest against tyranny leads to the development of communism. (Witnesses)

## **Section 3 - Religious developments and Divine Judgments - Chapters 12 - 19**

- Chs.12,13 The development and destruction of the Holy Roman Empire. (Sea beast)
- Ch. 14 Kingdom Vision (Lamb on Mt. Zion)
- Chs.15-16 Divine judgment on latter day Political System. (Vials)
- Chs.17-19 Divine judgment on latter day Religious System. (Harlot & scarlet beast)

## **Section 4 - Kingdom of God established**

- Ch. 20 Sin and death destroyed.
  - Ch.21 New Jerusalem.
  - Ch.22 The final Appeal of Christ to the Ecclesias.
- Note - These headings only give the GENERAL outline of the Apocalypse

## **Daniel and Revelation**

The book of Daniel is the Apocalypse of the Old Testament and provides the foundation for the book of Revelation. The well known second chapter of Daniel gives a simple foundation for the rest of the prophecy. It shows the various phases of man's kingdom seen as it were through the eyes of a man, Nebuchadnezzar (ie the impressive image of a man). Later prophecies reveal to Daniel how the Almighty sees man's kingdom, as hideous beasts. The fourth beast in Daniel ch. 7 re-appears in its various stages in Revelation. More about this later; suffice it to say now that the beast in Daniel 7 is a key to understanding the beasts in Revelation.

Daniel's prophecy gives another clue which helps with the interpretation of the Apocalypse. Returning to Daniel Ch.2; here is a long term prophecy which begins in the time of the prophet ("thou art this head of gold") and obviously ends with the establishment of the Kingdom ("in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom..."). Between these two easily identifiable points, more detail is given relating to events which fit between the two points mentioned in a given sequence. This prophecy forms a basis for other prophecies in Daniel (ie Chapters 7, 8 and 10 - 12). These prophecies deal with roughly the same time period as ch. 2 but with each prophecy more detail is given. Daniel's last prophecy (ch.10-12) gives the most detail,

but it is still obviously a gradual unfolding of the Divine purpose shown in advance and in the correct sequence.

The Revelation begins in the time of the apostle John, "things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev.1:1); and looks to the time of the kingdom and beyond. It is in fact the legs and feet of the image in Daniel 2 but given with much more detail. This detail unfolds in a given sequence as can be seen particularly with the Seals, Trumpets and Vials.

A third similarity can be seen between the overall structure of Daniel and Revelation. It will be seen from the chart (General Structure of the Apocalypse) that in the Trumpet and Vial sections; events apply first to the Western part of the empire, then to the Eastern part. A similar pattern emerges in Daniel. After the vision of the image in Ch.2 the prophecy is expanded in Ch.7 concentrating on events in the West. Chapter 8 then expands on Ch.2 but concentrates on events in the East.

### **Seals, Trumpets & Vials**

The centre section of the chart shows the three main historical sections in the prophecy. The first section which uses the symbol of the seals relates to internal events in the Roman Empire where the ecclesias were placed; it ends with the first of three great earthquakes when the empire becomes 'Christian'. From this stage onwards powers begin to invade the empire. A different symbol therefore is now used; trumpets are employed to summon these peoples to come against the empire. During this period the political aspect of Rome was eventually destroyed. The transition to the third main section was brought about by the second great earthquake; this can be identified with the French Revolution. The effects of this event, as the prophecy shows, gathers the nations "to the battle of the great day of God almighty". It places mankind on its final collision course with the God of Israel. The symbol therefore changes again, the vials of the wrath of God being poured out on the territory of the old Roman Empire.

### **First Seal (Rev.6:1-2)**

When John sees The Lamb open the first seal, he is aware of 'the noise of thunder'. Thunder in the Old Testament is indicative of divine displeasure and judgment. "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them" (1 Sam.2:10) Specific examples of this can be seen relating to Egypt (Ex.9:23), The Philistines (1 Sam.7:10) and Jerusalem (Isa.29:6). God asks his servant Job, "Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?.....Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him. Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place. (Job 40:9&12) Bearing in mind when the Apocalypse was given to John, there was one such person who fitted this description at that time.

Concerning the emperor Domitian the Chronicle states the following (p.222 column 2) "*ROME, 18 September 96. Domitian, who has been conducting a reign of terror for the past three years, is assassinated as a result of a plot by his wife and two praetorian guards.*" When God speaks to Job about the thunder of his wrath it is suggested that the purpose of the judgment is to save the righteous. This applies to Domitian for much of his terror was directed against the first century Christians towards the end of his reign. The thunder appears to have a further application. The

RV for verse 1 gives "... I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder..." The thundering voice of the spirit was to prevail above all others and bring about the changes required by the divine purpose.

The faithful servant who "wept much" because those things which "must shortly come to pass" were sealed, is now invited to "Come and see". The principle is seen here that "Surely the LORD God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7) Those who are not his servants and who do not have a keen desire to "Come and see" remain in darkness. To all such the Lord "shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,"

### **A White Horse**

The result of the voice of thunder was to remove the terrors of the reign of Domitian and replace them with peace, prosperity and plenty. This period lasted during the reign of five emperors; Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius and Marcus Aurelius. The Chronicle records (p.225 column 1) "*Rome 101. In the three years since he became emperor, Trajan has gained wide popularity with his public work schemes and generous benefits for the poor. At the same time he has promised not to increase taxes. He is reforming the civil service to root out corruption and promote efficiency*". A headline in the Chronicle for the year 132 when Hadrian was emperor reads "*ROME BASKS IN PEACE AND PROSPERITY*". (P.229) The historian Gibbon remarks "were a man called to fix upon an epoch in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus" This is from AD96 to 180.

White is the colour which symbolizes righteousness and purity in Scripture. "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isa.1:18). "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" (Rev.19:8) A comparison is not being made between Roman emperors and the saints, although a principle can be seen in action. Proverbs 29:2 states "When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn". The work of righteousness in the kingdom of God will be peace. To a lesser extent the Roman Empire enjoyed a period of peace because its rulers were not thoroughly wicked men.

### **An Arrowless Bowman**

John saw in his vision the rider of the white horse with a bow but no mention is made of arrows. The rider also had a crown "and he went forth conquering and to conquer". The empire was largely at peace, however, a conquest was being made and warfare was in progress. The ecclesias of the second century were not using "carnal" weapons, but the word of God which is sharper than any two edged sword. This is shown in the symbol of the first seal as the rider of the horse with a bow but no arrows. Humanly speaking their mission was impossible because they would not use force. Their mission was to turn many to righteousness and they were in part successful. This can be seen in the opposition to their growing numbers; for men largely love darkness rather than light. The Chronicle records on page 235 "*Lyons August 177. Feeling against the Christians has reached fever pitch here..... There have been many instances of mobs stoning and raping Christians. The Roman administration has finally bowed to this popular feeling.*

*More than 20 Christians were arrested. Those who claimed Roman citizenship were tortured and beheaded in jail. The others were lead into the amphitheatre and thrown to the wild beasts in front of a howling crowd"*

### **A Crown of Victory**

The ecclesia at Smyrna was commended for its works, the disciples there were told to "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Taking the day for a year principle (see Num.14:34 & Ezek.4:6) the persecution was to last ten years, possibly during the reign of Trajan. The persecution for those mentioned above at Lyons came later during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Although the faithful suffered as a result of their witnessing during the period of the first seal they are the true victors. The Lord, the righteous judge will give them a crown of righteousness at 'that day'.

### **Second Seal (Rev.6:3-4)**

The events of the second seal bring a dramatic change in events. John was told that the peace which existed during the first seal period was to cease. A red horse now appears and its rider, wielding a sword, is given power "to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another". It is not too difficult to interpret the events foretold by this seal within the Roman 'earth'. The Chronicle gives a flavour of the bloodshed on page 237 "*Commodiana 189. The son of Marcus Aurelius believes he is the god Hercules and has renamed Rome 'Commodiana' after himself. He prefers killing captive men and animals, in his favourite role as gladiator, to running the empire. Instead of politics there are games lasting 14 days in which men are chained together and obliged to kill one another. By way of change there are deadly chariot races led by the drunken ruler. Senators and nobles must attend, for no-one is safe. Indeed, most citizens must now pay 'voluntary' sums to Commodus to avoid assassination*". On page 238 column 2 the following is recorded, "*Rome February 212. Geta is murdered on the orders of his brother Carracalla, who proceeds to unleash bloody repression in Rome. Among the 20,000 victims is the famous jurist Papinian*". The bloodshed was not confined to Rome, page 239 column 1 records: "*Italy 206. While provincial governors and commanders of legions embrace treachery and murder in seeking to gain the imperial purple, people live in fear*".

### **Third seal (Rev.6:5-6)**

The scene changes again: the conditions for the people turn from red to black. Black can be seen in Scripture to signify mourning and distress (see Jer.8:21 and Jer.14:20): whilst in Lam.5:10 it indicates famine. Both of these symbols fit the next period in the Roman Empire, the former being a result of the latter. The horse rider carries a pair of balances and John hears a voice saying "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" The words of this voice appear to indicate scarcity of food, which agrees with the symbology of a black horse. Some have seen the balances as a sign of the need to carefully preserve and measure the food supply while others have seen them as a symbol of man's justice (or lack of it) which resulted in famine. See Job 31:6

History certainly records a period of distress and famine in the empire following the bloodshed of the second seal period. On page 245, column 4 the Chronicle records the following *"With wars raging throughout the empire and inflation rampant at home, Rome is facing a major economic crisis ..... New coins are being reproduced in record numbers, but with their silver content reduced by more than 90%. The depreciation of the Denarius - combined with the dangers on road and sea - has paralysed trade. Plague has broken out again and food production has been hit by drought. Famines have become commonplace. Tradesmen, craftsmen and farmers are all hard hit by the depression"*. It is worth noting here that the weather played a part in the outworking of this seal period.

#### **Fourth Seal (Rev.6:7-8)**

The first three seals were considered in the previous article. The first seal relates to a time of peace and prosperity in the Roman Empire. The next two seals bring severe problems of war, bloodshed, famine etc. The fourth seal continues in the same vein; one overall effect of these appalling events is to weaken the grip of pagan rule in the empire which existed during the first seal period and prepare the stage for a change from paganism to false Christianity which occurs during the sixth seal.

The opening of the fourth seal reveals to John a "pale horse", its rider was called "death, and hell followed after him". Power is given to death and hell "over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and hunger, and with death, and with beasts of the earth."

#### **The Fourth Part**

Before examining the other details in this seal it may be useful to identify what is meant by "the fourth part". The Chronicle gives the headline at the top of page 247 (213DK) *"Four emperors rule Roman Empire"*. Gibbon gives more detail about the divisions as follows.

1. The praefact of the east. (Egypt, Persia & Thrace)
2. The praefact of Illiricum. (Pannonia, Dacia, Macedonia & Greece)
3. The praefact of Italy. (Italy and to the North as far as the Danube and Northern Africa)
4. The praefact of the Gauls. (Including Spain & Britain)

Diocletian ruled the empire (284 - 305) towards the end of the fourth seal period. A fourfold division is also seen earlier during the reign of Gallienus (253 - 268). During this period one of the divisions consisted of Rome and Italy; it is this area which appears to be singled out as "the fourth part". During the third seal, Rome and Italy was spared the worst of the effects of famine etc. The time had now come in the divine plan to inflict judgment at the heart of the empire along with the rest of its territory.

### **To kill with sword, hunger and death.**

The chart shows this period to begin AD 235. A Thracian peasant of immense physical stature called Maximinus was proclaimed emperor during this year by mutinous troops. (see Chronicle p.240 column one) This Maximinus was a very cruel and ruthless ruler. Many Roman rulers and governors were tortured and killed at his command. Distrust and jealousy prevailed among the senate to such an extent that all members carried a sword for protection, or worse. The brief reign of Maximinus set the scene for the next few decades. During this period many Caesars and governors were brutally murdered. Page 244 (210DK) column 1 in the Chronicle records *"Rome, 238. The Praetorian Guard mutinies at the senate's choice of Balbinus and Pupienus as Joint emperors, and appoints in their place Gordian III, grandson of the former governor of Africa. The Praetorians then kill Balbinus and Pupienus"*. The chronicle records the untimely deaths of 10 senior rulers in the empire on pages 244 & 245 (210 & 211DK). The famine of the third seal is also evident during this period.

### **To kill with the beasts of the earth**

The nations which attack and dominate Israel in Daniel ch. 7 are described as beasts. Using the same symbology; John was being shown that during this period the empire would be subject to invasion from other nations. The chronicle reports on page 245 (211DK) *"Rome 260. The Roman Empire is coming under more sustained attack than ever before. In the east, where the recently founded Sassanid dynasty is determined to regain Asia minor, Syria and Egypt.....In Europe the Franks have invaded Gaul, sweeping into Spain while the Goths and vandals are attacking Italy and Greece. And in Africa it is the Berber tribes who are attacking Roman land. What makes the crisis so dangerous for Rome is that its armies are divided, often to the point of near civil war, as each elects its own Caesar..... much of the empire faces famine in the wake of pillaging armies of Rome and its increasingly potent enemies"*

### **Fifth Seal (Rev.6:9 - 11)**

The fifth seal brings an entirely different change of scene. No longer a different horse with a different rider, but "under the alter the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held". This seal deals not with the politics of the Roman Empire but with the true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The symbology speaks of ecclesial tribulation. On page 248 (214DK) column 1 the chronicle records *"Asia minor 304. Since his purge of the army and the court in 302, Diocletian has issued four edicts aimed at destroying Christianity in the Roman Empire.....Christians are forced to sacrifice to the pagan gods on the pain of death"*.

Diocletian made great reforms during the early part of his rule which resulted in a measure of stability and peace in the empire, he was also tolerant of the Christians during this period which resulted in many of them reaching a good social standing. When Diocletian appointed Galerius in 293 as one of the rulers in the empire a dramatic change occurred. Galerius stirred up the vigor of Diocletian against the church. He was now of the opinion that the problems which befell the empire were due to the Christians. The four edicts mentioned in the above quote were; 1. Death to all who held secret meetings for religious worship. 2. Everyone possessing copies of the scriptures must surrender them to be burnt. 3. Anyone refusing to accept pagan beliefs not allowed to accept public office. 4. Such people were no longer protected by the law.

## **How long?**

These measures caused many to renounce their beliefs. Two main reasons account for this capitulation; firstly the church was divided because false teachers were given platform and the inspired word was neglected. One such heresy is mentioned in the Chronicle on page 251 column 4 regarding the nature of Christ. The second reason was the unwillingness of many to forfeit their social standing. Others however remained faithful to truth and therefore accepted the persecution which came. It caused them to ask "How long O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." They were given "white robes" to be worn when Messiah is crowned in millennial glory. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they..... These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb." (Rev.7:13-14) Before this is accomplished however they must "rest a little season" because others must suffer before they would all wear the white robes. The "rest" is the sleep of death, "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours" (Rev.14:13)

## **Sixth seal (Rev.6:12-17)**

This period brings the first of the three great earthquakes in the Apocalypse accompanied with momentous events in the heavens. The same symbolism can be seen in Isa.13 where the destruction of Babylon is foretold. "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate : and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. (Isa.13:9) This event came from the LORD, his mighty hand was seen first on the rulers of Babylon described in symbol as the heavens. "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine..... Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place". (v.10 & 13) The heavens represent the rulers while the earth symbolises the people.

## **Sun , Moon and Stars**

It is obvious from a reading of Rev.6:12-17 that the main convulsions are in the "heavens": the earth however does not escape as verse 15 shows. The elements of this upheaval are listed as follows. (1) "The sun became black" The rulers of the people were eclipsed and ceased to shine. The fifth seal closed with four emperors ruling the empire: Licinius, Maximin, Maxentius and Constantius. The Chronicle records on page 250 (216DK) "*Italy, 28 October 312. After invading Italy, Constantine defeats Maxentius at the battle of Milvain bridge, making him master of the whole Roman west*". And then "*Asia Minor, 324. After inflicting a series of military defeats on Licinius by land and sea Constantine captures and soon executes his co-emperor. His hold on the east secured, Constantine is now sole ruler of the empire*". (2) "the moon became as blood" The natural moon reflects the light of the sun. In symbol it represents the state religion which gains its power and authority from the state. During this earthquake the state religion changed from Paganism to a false Christianity causing much bloodshed in the process. Returning to the Chronicle on page 251(217DK) "*Milan, 3 February 313 The Emperor Constantine, the master of the western empire, and Licinius, the most powerful man in the east agreed a new policy here today of absolute toleration for Christians*". (3) "The stars of heaven fell to the earth.....The

heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together" The statesmen and rulers, all of whom had Pagan beliefs were deposed and replaced by 'Christians'. Many of the original rulers had to flee for their lives to the mountains. (4) "every mountain and Island were moved out of their places". Not only were the chief rulers deposed but all systems of rule were changed. (5) "And said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us..... and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb". This passage is a quote from Hosea 10:8; here the prophet reminds Israel of their unfaithfulness to their God in worshipping Pagan gods. "They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills" (Hosea 4:13). When divine wrath came they called to the false gods for protection. Similarly in the Roman Empire, the pagans cried to their gods; for they did believe they suffered because of the "wrath of the Lamb". The events of this seal are expanded in Rev.12 which will be considered in a later article.

### **A warning for Today**

The Chronicle records the following headline on page 251(217DK) concerning the events of the sixth seal. *"Nicea, 325. Clever compromise looks set to unify Christian Church".* By 325 false teaching had made considerable inroads to the Church, the argument at this stage concerned the nature of Christ. Was he "very God" or as the followers of Arius were arguing, if he was the son of God he must have had a beginning and could not be wholly God. The chronicle records *"Constantine is now using his skills as a peacemaker in the spiritual sphere; his advisors have devised a compromise solution which looks likely to carry the council. He is urging the adoption of a new creed which affirms that Christ 'is of one substance with the Father'. Superficially this looks like a victory for the orthodox church over the Arians. In fact the cleverly worded creed is much more ambiguous, and many leading Arians have already said that they are prepared to adopt it. As the council opens there is a hard core of 200 Arians opposing it, but Constantine should win and achieve a strong unified Church barely twelve years after the persecutions"*

The warnings of the Apostle Paul were not heeded in the days of Constantine. Similar devices were apparently being used at Corinth in the first century. The Apostle wrote to that ecclesia, "the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh that with me there should be yea yea AND nay nay. But as God is true, our word to you was not yea AND nay..... For all the promises of God in him are YEA and in him AMEN, unto the glory of God by us". (2 Cor.1:17-20) Paul did not say yes and no at the same time, his message was not intentionally ambiguous in an effort to make peace. He knew the words of his Lord "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth... For I am come to set a man at variance against his father .....And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Mat.10:34-36)

We must be peacemakers within the constraints of these teachings of Paul and Jesus Christ. Making intentionally ambiguous statements Paul tells us is to "purpose according to the flesh"; it is the way politicians operate and it was the way in which the serpent beguiled eve. The Chronicle recorded that Constantine achieved "a strong and unified Church" with his "cleverly worded document". He was also instrumental in producing "another gospel" which was not able to save.

## **The Seventh Seal (Rev.8:1)**

In the two previous articles events relating to the first six seals were considered, culminating in the first of the three "great" earthquakes in the Apocalypse. The events of the seventh seal are too many and varied to be described in one section, the seventh seal is therefore divided into seven sub-sections. When the seventh seal is opened John sees seven angels and to each is given a trumpet (ch.8:2): hence the prophecy moves into the trumpet section. Between the end of the sixth seal and the beginning of the seventh John sees a vision relating to the millennium (ch.7); the whole prophecy is punctuated with seven such visions to remind the apostle and subsequent readers of the glory prepared for all saints in Christ Jesus. These visions will be considered later in the series.

The question might be asked, why change the symbol from seal to trumpet? Unloosing the seals one by one revealed stage by stage the divine purpose concerning the Roman Empire and the saints who were living in it. Opening the seventh seal required the angels to busy themselves outwith the empire and cause other nations to invade; seven angels were therefore given trumpets which were blown to summon these nations into action.. It can be seen in Old Testament prophecies that the trumpet is used in this way when nations are used to inflict punishment upon Israel. "I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."(Jer.4:19). Or, "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid ..... Therefore thus saith the Lord God; An adversary there shall be even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be destroyed" (Amos 3:6&11).

## **Silence in heaven about half an hour**

Before the angels began to sound the trumpets there was a period of silence in heaven "about the space of half an hour". Using the day for a year principle\* one day in the prophecy is taken for one year in the fulfilment. The Jews divided the day into 12 hours, therefore one hour is equal to one month or 30 days / years. This would mean half an hour in the prophecy would equal 15 years in the fulfilment. This requires a period of "about" 15 years in the political heaven at the beginning of the seventh seal when there is silence. The Chronicle records on page 250 column 2 "*Asia Minor 324. After inflicting a series of military defeats on Licinius by land and sea Constantine captures and soon executes his co-emperor..... Constantine is now sole ruler of the empire.*" For many years there had been war 'in heaven' because the empire had been controlled by a number of emperors at the same time. Now Constantine alone is ruler; this lasted for 13 years until his death in 337 when the empire was divided by his three sons. Again the Chronicle records *Italy March 340. After defeating and killing his brother Constantine II at Aquilia in northern Italy, Constans unites the whole of the west under his rule.*" Soon after the death of Constantine the peace is shattered. During the period of 'peace' however; whilst the church and state were enjoying a period of unity, it must be remembered that the true believers were suffering persecution at the hands of the 'state' church with its new found powers. This is why 'another' angel is introduced into the vision to help the ecclesias.

## **Another Angel**

The angels perform many and varied tasks to move the divine plan forward. In ch.8:3 an angel is introduced into the vision having a different mission to the trumpet angels. The role of this angel is to work directly on behalf of the saints who were suffering persecution. The angel had a golden censer and is seen to be before the golden altar. In the tabernacle this altar was placed before the veil (Ex.30:6) so that the fragrance of the incense filled the Most Holy Place where God dwelled. Rev.5:8 shows the odours from the golden vials equate with the prayers of the saints whilst Luke 1:10 shows how the faithful engaged in prayer when the priest offered incense. So in Rev.8:3-4 the angel offers incense with the prayers of the saints. The result is seen in v.5 "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. This earthquake, although smaller in magnitude than that of the sixth seal is an answer to the prayers of the saints coupled with the work of the angel. The Chronicle states on page 254 column 1 *"Syria 17th June 362. The emperor Julian passes an edict banning Christians from teaching grammar and rhetoric. He has already revealed himself to be a pagan and has proclaimed toleration for all religions."* Thus the earthquake is a temporary return to paganism by the emperor Julian who relieves the persecution of the saints by pronouncing toleration for all religions. The prayers are answered.

## **The Angels Prepare to Sound**

The sixth verse of Rev.8 speaks of the trumpet angels preparing to sound. Before the attacks come to weaken and eventually destroy the western part of the empire, the angels are busy making the necessary preparations. Page 254 in the Chronicle at column 2 records *"Balkans, 376. The Visigoths, who have been inhabiting Dacia for the past 150 years, are driven by the Huns to seek Roman permission to cross the lower Danube. Permission is granted."* Crossing the Danube allowed the Goths into the Roman empire. Roman permission was granted because the Goths alleged to be friendly, the truth later emerged when the trumpets begin to sound. Another aspect of the angels preparing to sound emerges from the Chronicle on page 254, columns 3 & 4. *"The Huns invade Europe, upper Danube basin 375. Roman forces on this boundary of the empire watch an increasing horde of barbarians on the northern bank of the Danube. .... These heralds might not yet be at the gates of Rome, but they are just across the river and threaten to intensify the pressures on the empire."* This preparation lasted some 30 years from 365 to 395.

## **The Third Part**

In each of the first four trumpets a "third part" is mentioned. This can be identified as a third part of the empire.(see map) Under the first four trumpets the Roman or Western section is destroyed. The next third which is the middle east and North Africa falls to the Saracens under the fifth trumpet which is also described as the first woe. The remainder or last third is taken by the Turks under the sixth trumpet or second woe. (See Rev.9:18) This three way split is also seen in the religions which developed. The religion of the Western section was Roman Catholic whilst that of the East was Greek Orthodox. This remained in Greece, part of Asia Minor and the Aegean islands whilst in the rest of the East Greek Orthodoxy was replaced by Mohammedanism.

### **The first angel sounded (ch.8:7)**

Hail and fire mingled with blood on the earth followed the sounding of this trumpet. Hail and fire is used literally by God to destroy his enemy, during the plagues on Egypt. Hail appears in Isa.28:2 to foretell the invasion of Shalmanezzer against Israel. "Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail ..... shall cast down to the earth with the hand". Similarly in Isa.29:6 "Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel...." The same figure is used in the Apocalypse to show divine judgment against Rome where the result is the destruction of trees and grass. This can be equated with the common people. Taking Old Testament examples again, "all flesh is grass" (Isa.40:6), and "Then shall all the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth" (1 Chr.16:33). It is also worth noting that the attacks came on the grass and forest lands of Western Europe.

The history of the period 395 - 429 reveals the scourge of the Visigoths under their leader Alaric on the central parts of the Roman Empire. Wherever Alaric and his armies went they left behind them a scene of devastation. The Chronicle records the scene in Rome when the barbarians reach that city. *"Barbarians sack Rome, 24th August 410. For three days German hordes have roamed the streets of Rome, burning and pillaging the greatest city in the known world. Under their leader, King Alaric, the Visigoths have been an internal threat to the empire since being given sanctuary in 375, roaming from Thrace (where they had internal autonomy) to Illyricum. Epirus was theirs, but they invaded Italy. Rome has had to hire barbarian mercenaries including Vandals to meet the Visigoth threat."*

### **The Second Angel Sounded (ch.8:8-9)**

The work of the second angel quickly brings more destruction, "as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea" this resulted in a third part of the sea becoming blood and therefore lifeless. The Old Testament uses the symbol of a mountain to depict a king and his armies. Regarding Babylon, Jer. 51:25 says "Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD which destroyest all the earth". Isa.40:4 describing the time when the glory of the LORD is revealed states "every mountain and hill shall be made low". The destroying mountain on this occasion is Gaiseric, king of the Vandals. John saw the mountain burning with fire (symbolizing judgment) being cast into the sea. The vandal attack was on the coastal areas of north Africa and Gaiseric's aim was to control the whole of the western Mediterranean. The Chronicle records his progress on page 263 under the headline *"Vandals capture the city of Carthage, October 439. The roman city of Carthage has fallen to the vandals, putting the whole of North Africa under the control of this wandering Germanic people. A vandal state has come into being under the ruthless rule of Gaiseric, who has brought 80,000 people - including 15,000 warriors with him from Spain. He crossed the straits of Gibraltar in 429 and marched along the North African coast, sacking and looting city after city..... with the loss of Carthage Rome has given up sovereignty over much of its former territory in Africa, including the lush wheat fields upon which the empire depended for bread. ....the vandal threat is not confined to Africa. Gaiseric is building a fleet of fast ships to try to control the western Mediterranean."* Gaiseric destroyed the Roman navy including the burning of new fleets which were built to oppose him. As a result of his actions all trade by sea came to an end. He seized Sardinia and Corsica, and in

455 attacked and sacked Rome. Although Africa is not strictly in the western empire as shown on the map, as the above quote shows, the Western empire was considerably weakened due to loss of its 'bread basket' and its navy. Some brethren see the northern coast of Africa around Carthage as part of the western empire.

### **The Third Angel Sounded (ch.8:10-11)**

The sounding of the third trumpet brings more misery and destruction to the western part of the empire, particularly to the alpine regions of central Europe. This time John sees a great burning star fall upon the "rivers and fountains of waters". This is an apt description of the region of northern Italy where there are many rivers which are fed by the snow of the Alps. The shooting star equates with Attila the Hun who had a brilliant but brief career.

Page 265 column 1 in the Chronicle records a defeat for Attila as he tries to invade Gaul having led his armies from the East. He is defeated by the Romans having made alliance with the Visigoths, Franks Burgundians and others. The year following this defeat he turns his rage against Northern Italy. Page 264 column 1 records *"Italy 452. The Huns invade Italy and sack a series of Northern Italian cities including Padua and Verona, before Pope Leo persuades Attila to desist from his planned attack on Rome and withdraw."* The time is yet right for Rome to fall to these Barbarian attacks which by this stage have seriously weakened its rule.

### **The star is called Wormwood**

Verse eleven of chapter eight reads "And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." The Greek word for wormwood is 'apsinthos'. This is also the name of a river in Illyricum where Attila ruled before his attacks on Italy.

### **The Fourth Angel sounded (ch.8:12)**

The work of the fourth trumpet angel results in the political eclipse of Roman government in the West. Weakened by the previous attacks the Roman third now falls. By this stage a number of Barbarian nations are in Italy, but it is the Goths who finally emerge as victors and take control. The Chronicle records the headline on page 271 *"Glorious Goth is master of the west. Italy 510. The Ostrogoths, now the most powerful nation in western Europe following their annexation of southeastern Gaul. The move, aimed at containing the Franks, puts the Ostrogothic king Theodoric, in control of a kingdom that stretches from Gaul to Illyricum ... Goths and Romans strictly divide in Italian life. Goths run the army, Romans the civil service. Goths own a third of Italy, but old Roman families enjoy traditional powers. Goths are Arian Christians - considered as heretics - while Romans are orthodox Catholics."* The final point made in this quote is interesting. The Roman empire was not simply replaced by another empire even as Daniel predicted; it gradually disintegrated. Here is seen the beginning of the iron and clay in the western part of the empire. Here also is seen emerging the Beast of the Sea described in Rev. 13; this will be considered in a later article.

\* The principle of taking a day in prophecy to represent a year in the fulfillment is taken from the following Old Testament examples.

1.Num.14:33-34. The spies were in the land of promise for forty days; they returned with an evil report which dissuaded the nation from entering the land. God tells them "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years," The children of Israel therefore wandered in the wilderness forty years.

2. Ezek.4:5-6 Ezekiel as a man of sign has to lie first on his left side, then on his right side a given number of days to bear the iniquity of Israel and Judah "thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year"

3. Gen29:27. Having served Laban seven years for Rachel, Jacob is deceived and given Leah. Laban says to Jacob regarding his seven years service for Rachel "Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also"

The last article concluded with the fourth trumpet which brought about the collapse of the Western Roman Empire due to invasion by a number of barbarian nations. For a time at least the Western third of the empire was ruled by the Goths. The Apocalypse has more to say about events in the West as can be seen from the chart at the beginning of the series. The sea beast, earth beast and scarlet beast all relate to events in the West; these will be considered separately. To remain with the sounding of the trumpets however attention is drawn to the destruction of the remaining two thirds of the empire. This occurs during the blowing of the fifth and sixth trumpets, also described as the first and second woes.

### **The Fifth Angel Sounded (ch.9:1-12)**

Why was this and subsequent trumpet soundings described as 'woes'? A brief look at the history of the times will show that the time duration of the last three trumpets is much longer than that of the first four trumpets, - a little over two hundred years to accomplish the first four trumpet periods, but more than thirteen hundred years to date for the next three periods. The effects were to last much longer and were to end with the final judgments of almighty God on the earth.

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit." (ch.9:1) The star had fallen to the 'earth' to torment the Roman earth. John records that the star was given a key, and with that key "he opened the bottomless pit". Once opened, smoke ascended out of the pit, and in the smoke came locusts whose power was to hurt certain people of the earth. In order to understand this section of the prophecy, it will be necessary to identify the different symbols first and then see how they fit together.

### **A Star**

A star, as seen on previous occasions, can refer to a ruler or leader: here the star can be equated with the Moslem prophet Mohammed who unified the Arabs and caused them to invade the Roman empire. The Chronicle records on page 282 column 1 "*Arabia, 610. Mohammed, a preacher of the quraysh tribe of the Bedouin, begins to preach in Mecca, a prosperous oasis*

*town and centre of pilgrimage. He calls for an end to the demons and idols of Arab religion and conversion to the ways of one god, Allah."*

And on column two of the same page "*Arabia, 622. Mohammed is forced to leave Mecca and take refuge at Yathrib (Medina). His flight is known as the Hegira.*" This was the beginning of the Mohammedan era.

### **The pit of the Abyss**

The next symbol to identify is the bottomless pit. The phrase is translated "pit of the abyss" in the Diaglott, Young's literal translation, RV etc. An abyss is a deep depression in the surface of the earth; the greatest such depression on the surface of the earth is to be found in the area of the next third of the Roman empire to fall; ie Northern Africa and the middle east. (see map in article 4) This abyss is the great depression around the Dead Sea. It is through this area that the Arabs swarmed in their tens of thousands to torment the Roman empire. The next question to answer is to identify the smoke and the locusts which ascended out of the abyss. The smoke is described as the smoke of a great furnace; another link is seen here with the Dead Sea area regarding the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah. Gen.19:28 describes what Abraham saw. "And he looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah, and to all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace". In John's vision the sun and the air is 'darkened' by the smoke of the furnace; this represents the judgments which resulted in the political eclipse which occurred in the relevant third of the empire.

### **Locusts of the earth**

Out of the smoke appeared locusts: these are symbols of the vast numbers of Arabs who emerged from the Arabian peninsular. The same symbol is used for invading Arab armies in the Old Testament. Describing the Midianites who invaded Israel; "For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude"(Jud.6:5) Locusts are indigenous to Arabia, this is borne out by Ex.10:13; the plague of locusts on Egypt were driven there by an east wind, from Arabia. According to Mohammedan tradition, locusts dropped into the hands of Mohammed with the inscription on their wings, 'We are the army of the great God'.

### **Power as the scorpions of the earth**

The sting of a scorpion is deadly; verse ten records the sting was in their tails. This is a fitting description of a weapon used by the Saracens. It was pulled along behind the horses when they went to battle. The weapon was a hollow tube from which the revolutionary mixture 'Greek or Saracen fire' was projected. Gibbon in his 'Decline and fall of the Roman Empire' describes the effects of this mixture of Naphtha and sulphur. "From this mixture, which produced a thick smoke and a loud explosion, proceeded a fierce and obstinate flame, which not only rose in perpendicular ascent, but likewise burnt with equal vehemence in descent or lateral progress; instead of being extinguished, it was nourished and quickened by the element of water". This was a new weapon symbolically described as the deadly sting of a scorpion. The Saracens did refer to the fiery missiles which they propelled as scorpions. Even without this weapon the Saracens were a formidable foe.

## Appearance of the locusts described (v.7-9)

Various details are given to describe the Saracen armies as follows:-

- a) "like unto horses prepared unto battle" . Many of their victories were aided by cavalry and horse drawn artillery.
- b) "on their heads were as it were crowns like gold" The record does not say they had crowns of gold, but "as it were" crowns "like" gold. A description of the distinctive turban worn by the Saracens.
- c) "faces as the faces of men" The Arabs were unshaven with beards unlike the Romans.
- d) "hair as the hair of women" Neither did they cut their hair.
- e) "teeth were as the teeth of lions" This indicated their ferocious spirit.
- f) "breastplates of iron" they used defensive armour.
- g) "Wings as the sound of chariots" The noise created by the wings of a swarm of locusts is great. The noise of the Saracen army was greater.

## Mohammed uses the key

Having identified some of the symbols in this prophecy, it now remains to see how they fit into the history of the times. The star of verse one, Mohammed, achieved two significant things: using religion he unified the various tribes in Arabia and he also inspired them to courageous warfare. Dying for the cause of Islam assured soldiers of a reward in the next life. Thus he used the key of the pit of the abyss. The Chronicle gives an epitaph to Mohammed on page 285 entitled *"Mohammed, unifier of Arabia, is dead"* the article dated 632 goes on to say *"In 610 he began to preach, calling for Arabs to turn to Allah, the one true God who had revealed himself to the Christians and the Jews (who had both misinterpreted his word and was now revealing himself through Mohammed. Mohammed continued to receive revelations from Allah, and they began to be recorded. He saw himself as an instrument of God and submitted to his will, and the new faith became known as Islam (submission). Its adherents were called Moslems (they who submit)."*

The Saracens with their new faith in Allah having invaded the remains of the Persian empire turned its attention also to the Roman world which is the subject of the Apocalypse. Like a swarm of locusts they came from the pit of the abyss (the Dead Sea area) to conquer the middle east. The Chronicle records the headline, also on page 285 *"Syria and Jerusalem fall to Arab invaders"* this article dated 638 states *"The Byzantine empire is reeling under the breathtaking advance of the Moslem Arabs, who only six years after the death of Mohammed, have almost chased the imperial armies from the near east."* The breathtaking advance continued, Alexandria fell in 642. Another headline in the Chronicle for 670 *"Moslems conquer North Africa"* the following is recorded. *"The Byzantine empire is once more smarting from the onward, seemingly unstoppable, march of the armies of Islam. This time it is the turn of North Africa to fall to the caliphs"*.

The armies of the Caliph were stopped however when they turned their attention to Europe, for this was required by prophecy; Europe was to remain 'Christian'. They did invade Spain but were checked by the Franks from further advance On page 295 the Chronicle records *"Gaul 723. The Frankish general, Charles Martel ('The Hammer'), has gained a brilliant victory at Poitiers over*

*the seemingly unstoppable Arab forces, whose battle cry (from the Koran) is 'Paradise lies in the shadow of the sword' ..... It looks as though Charles Martel has put paid to Arab ambitions in Europe"* (The son and successor to Charles Martel, Peppin the Short entered into an alliance with the Pope. This paved the way for the Holy Roman Empire or the Beast of the Earth in Rev.13.) The Arabs were also defeated each time they attempted to take Constantinople.

### **It was commanded them**

"And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads" (Rev.9:4) On page 94 of Ockley's 'History of the Saracens' the author describes the commands of Abubeker (successor to Mohammed) to his forces before going to war against the Roman Empire "When you meet with your enemies, acquit yourselves like men, do not turn your backs; and if you get the victory, kill no little children, nor old people, nor women. Destroy no palm trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only kill such as you eat. When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons that live retired in monasteries, proposing to themselves to serve God that way: let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries. But you will also find another sort of people who belong to the synagogue of Satan and have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter, till they either turn Mohammedans or pay tribute." Note the dramatic change in the instructions when those of "the synagogue of Satan" or the Catholics were encountered. These were not sealed of God in the forehead (a symbol of the true believers, Ch.7:3). Mohammed hated the catholic religion, this is why its adherents were to be shown no mercy. Other religious people however were to be left alone.

### **Not to kill, but torment**

The locusts were given power to torment but not to kill "them" (v.5) for a period of five months. Using the day for a year principle, five months is one hundred and fifty days or years; the same time period is repeated in verse ten giving a total of three hundred years. (The normal period of locust activity is five months. The Arabs were to torment for twice this period.) History records a period of three hundred years whilst the Saracens waged war on the Roman empire. In 632 Mohammed died and his successor, Abubeker, became the first Caliph. This has already been mentioned in the quote from page 285 of the Chronicle. In his book "The Saracens - From the earliest times to the fall of Baghdad", Arthur Gilman on page 422 relates the Turkish siege of Baghdad, he concludes the chapter "Thus fell the caliph Muktader, and thus did the grip of the Turks tighten upon the weakening caliphate, in the year 932." This was exactly three hundred years from the succession of the first Caliph. The Turks incidentally are the subject of the sixth trumpet. The Chronicle does not record the killing of Caliph Muktader but on page 324 column 3 makes the following comment for the year 945 "*Baghdad, the capital of the once mighty Abbasid caliphs is now in the hands of a Shi'ite fisherman's son from northern Persia. The power of the caliphs has long been on the wane, and recent attacks have shown their impotence even in their home territories of Mesopotamia (Iraq). In the last ten years real power in the region has been in the hands of local warlords, who have ravaged the countryside.*" Thus for three hundred years the Arabs "tormented" the Eastern Roman Empire but were not allowed to destroy it. They did subdue the middle East and Northern Africa (one third of the original empire), but inroads into Europe were largely thwarted. The Chronicle records on page 288 column 2

*"Constantinople, 678. The Arabs have attacked Constantinople by sea annually since 674" the report concludes "It is a violent storm rather than this lethal weapon (Greek fire), that destroys the Arab fleet and puts an end to their harassment. The Arabs and the Byzantines sign a peace treaty." An example here of "stormy wind fulfilling his word" (Psalm 148:8)*

### **They had a king over them (v.11)**

The king over the Arab hoards was the Caliph. His name which means 'destroyer' is given in Hebrew and Greek. It is interesting to note that the Saracens tormented the Hebrew and Greek speaking parts of the old Roman empire but not the Latin speaking areas, ie Italy etc. However, despite much destruction and torment the Roman world survived the ravages of the locust power which did its best to bring 'death' (v.6) to the empire. In the east, Byzantine rule although weakened was still in tact; while in the west another Roman power (The Papacy) was arising.

### **And the sixth angel sounded (ch.9:13)**

On the sounding of the sixth trumpet a voice was heard from the golden altar saying to the angel with the trumpet, "loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates". Most versions say the angels were bound "at" the river Euphrates. This river formed a natural barrier to separate the tribes to its east with the remaining third of the Roman empire to its west. The loosing of the angels allowed these tribes to invade and finally destroy the eastern part of the empire; as each angel sounds, a tribe is released to invade. It is possible to identify these powers as follows.

1. The Seljuk Turks. The Chronicle records on page 342 column 1 *"Asia Minor (Anatolia) 1067. The Seljuk Turks take Caesarea in Cappadocia"* and on page 358 column 1 *"Asia Minor, 1176. The Seljuk Turks crush the Byzantine army at Myriocapalum"*

2. The Mongols. Page 371, column 3 of the Chronicle *"China, 1227. Ghengis Khan is dead. The Mongal captain who carved out the largest empire the world has yet seen has died in his camp..."* while page 357 describes *"the Mongols have created a vast empire which reaches from the Pacific to the Danube"* The prophetic record is not concerned with the vast majority of this empire, just the inroads made into the Byzantine empire made by the successors of Ghengis Khan. The Times Atlas of World History comments (page 128) *"the Mongols were not a numerous people, but from the outset Ghengis Khan did not hesitate to augment his armies from Turkish tribes on whose fidelity he could rely, until Turks in the Mongol armies outnumbered the native Mongols..... The Turks had already risen to prominence before the Mongol conquests, but the Mongols by breaking up the old Seljuk sultanate of Rum, cleared the way for the greatest of the Turkish empires - the Ottoman."* (The Ottoman Turks are released by the fourth angel)

3. The Tartars were under Timur (known as Timur the lame because of a limp). He was also known as Tamerlane, another ruthless ruler who created an empire from the Bosphorous to India. Because he crossed the Euphrates to further weaken the Byzantine empire, his armies figure in the prophecy. The Chronicle records on page 410 column 1 *"Asia Minor (Anatolia), 1402. The Ottoman sultan, Bayezid is defeated by Tamerlane in battle near Angora. Tamerlane captures Smyrna and reaches the Bosphorous."*

4. The Ottoman Turks finally caused the fall of Constantinople and created the great Ottoman empire which was to last almost 400 years. The headline appears in the Chronicle on page 427 "*Constantinople falls to the Ottomans*. The report continues "*29th May 1453. Constantinople, the capital of the once great Byzantine empire, has fallen to the Ottoman invaders..... It is the end of an era*"

### **An hour, a day, a month and a year**

Verse 14 gives this as the time "to slay the third part of men" ie for the four angels of the sixth trumpet to destroy the last third of the Roman empire known as the Byzantine empire. Using the day/year principle again this can be seen to represent a period of 391 years 1 month as shown.

	Years	Months
An Hour - equal to		1
A Day	1	
A Month	30	
A Year	360	
Whole period	391	1

The end of this period was undoubtedly the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The Chronicle records on page 427 column 1 "*Constantinople, 29th May 1453. Constantinople, capital of the once great Byzantine empire, has fallen to the Ottoman invaders ..... it is the end of an era*" This would place the commencement of the time period in 1062, which agrees with the history of the times. Page 340, column 1 of the Chronicle records the following. "*Baghdad, 1055. The Seljuk, Toghril Beg enters Baghdad as the Liberator and protector of the Abbasid caliphate against the Shi'ites. He restores the Sunni branch of Islam and installs himself as the temporal master of the caliph.*" The Cambridge Medieval History (vol.4) records that between the years 1058 and 1063 when he died the following events occurred:- (1) He returns to Baghdad as leader of the Seljuks. (2) The Caliph proclaims him to be "Right hand of the commander of the faithful" [he now becomes a champion of the Moslem faith] (3) he is offered the hand of the Caliph's daughter in marriage.

Toghril Beg was succeeded by Alp Arslan who in 1071 delivered a crushing blow to the eastern Roman empire. Commenting on this event the Cambridge History states "the Byzantine empire experienced a calamity from which it never recovered"

### **Fire, Jacinth and brimstone**

John sees a vast army as a result of these Euphratean angels being released. Fire and brimstone are obvious symbols of judgment (eg. Sodom & Gomorrah) Brimstone, according to Young means "like as of sulphur" while Jacinth or hyacinth means "dark blue". This is a fitting description of the use of gunpowder which was now being used, gunpowder is a mixture of charcoal, saltpetre and sulphur. In the BBC publication "Storm from the east - Ghengis Kahn to Khubilai Khan" the tactics of the Mongols are described on page 96. "Virtually every new military invention was used by the Mongols and with these machines they very quickly developed the modern principles of artillery. A prolonged battery from rocks, burning tar,

grenades and fire bombs into the enemy lines would quickly be followed up by an attack by mounted archers" The symbology used in v.19-20 is similar to that of the fifth trumpet (v.10), the difference being the weapons were now more deadly due to the use of gunpowder.

**the rest of the men**

The whole of the Roman empire has now been destroyed. The western third fell to the barbarian nations during the first four trumpets. North Africa and the middle east was destroyed by the Saracens in the fifth trumpet and now in the sixth trumpet the Turks have destroyed the eastern third. Who are the "rest of men" who, having seen Gods judgment on the empire continue to "worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood"? The inference is that they should be worshipping the true God, but they were not. This appears to be a reference to the western part of the empire where a "deadly wound was healed"(ch.13:3, more about this when considering the beasts). By the time the eastern third had been destroyed a new system had appeared in the west which was partly Roman because of the power of the papacy. The descriptions given in ch.9:20-21 aptly describe this evil system.

The events relating to the period described above contain much war and bloodshed which we may find distasteful. We need to remember however that in one respect this period was identical to that of Asa king of Judah who also found himself in the midst of battle. He was reminded that "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chron.16:9) The faithful to God in the Roman world had cried to God, (see Rev.8:3-4) the prayers were being answered and the great enemy of the saints, the Roman beast, was gradually being weakened. In the next article we shall consider the work of the those who witnessed against the false teachings of Rome.

It will be helpful at this stage to recap briefly with the aid of the chart. The study so far has covered the period from the opening of the first seal in AD 96 through the seal and trumpet periods to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The Apocalypse does not continue into the vial period after the sixth trumpet, rather does it give another vision of the coming kingdom (ch.10) followed by more detail of the seal and particularly the trumpet periods. This is done by considering the work of witnessing against the teachings of Rome (ch.11-12) and then by looking at the different phases of the Roman beast of Daniel chapter 7, (Rev. ch.12-13). The subject of this article is the work of the witnesses. As can be seen from the chart, the time of the witnessing begins in the sixth seal and continues through the whole of the trumpet period. These events relate mainly to the western part of the empire.

The symbols used in this vision are shown in the table below, a fuller description of their meanings are given in the text.

Reference	Symbol	Meaning
v.1	a reed like a rod	a rod of chastisement
v.1 v.2	the temple of God & altar the holy city	the saints or true believers who tried to maintain a faithful witness against Rome
v.2	forty and two months	1260 year witnessing by the saints
v.3	thousand two hundred and threescore days	1260 year witnessing period by the Protestants

v.3	my two witnesses	Protestant witness against the church of Rome, they resort to politics and force when necessary
v.4	two olive trees	
v.4	two candlesticks	
v.7	beast from bottomless pit	Western Roman Empire & Papacy
v.8	the great city	Territory of the Roman empire
v.9	three days and an half	'political' death of protestant witnesses
v.8	the street of the city	France, part of the Roman empire where the witnessing was stopped for a period
v.13	tenth part of the city	
v.12	come up hither	'political' resurrection of witnesses
v.13	a great earthquake	the French Revolution

It will be remembered that during the period of the sixth seal, a great political earthquake occurred when the empire changed from a pagan form of government to a false form of Christianity ruling the empire. This dramatic change took place in the year 312 AD when the emperor Constantine allegedly saw a vision of the cross in the sky before the battle of Milvain Bridge. This resulted in the emperor becoming 'Christian'. During the whole of the seal period, the teaching of the first century ecclesias was gradually being corrupted. Many were accepting such teachings as the immortality of the soul, sprinkling instead of immersion and the kingdom of God was now regarded as an allegory. It is little surprise that many so called Christians who had already accepted false doctrines were prepared to fall in with Constantine and accept positions of responsibility in his government. Others who were opposed to these changes objected, and so the witnessing began.

### **Two types of witness**

Referring to the chart again, it will be seen there are two types of witness. The saints witness for forty two months. They do not enter into politics neither do they take up the sword to fight, for the teaching of Christ and the apostles forbids both. Then there is the witness of the 'earth' and the 'woman' for 1260 days. This is a different form of witness, it comes from those who are opposed to the teachings of the state/church and they are prepared to use all means at their disposal including war and politics to make their point.

### **The Saints Witness**

In Rev.11:1 John is given a "reed like unto a rod" and with it is told to "measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein". He was told not to measure the outer court but to leave it out, so, he measured off a specific area. The inner parts of the temple were measured off for a particular purpose, John was not told specifically why it was measured off. A clue however is given in the instrument used to do the measuring; this was a reed like unto a rod. In Rev.21 when the angel measures the holy city it is a golden reed which is used but when the temple is measured in chapter 11, the instrument is a reed like a rod. The rod is used for chastisement. Paul asks the Corinthians "What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in the spirit of meekness?" (1 Cor.4:21) In the millennium Christ and the saints will rule the nations with a "rod of iron". During the period under consideration however the saints are subject to the rod for the temple is symbolic of the ecclesia. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God"(1 Cor.3:16) "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them"(2

Cor.6:16). The reason Paul wrote to Timothy was "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God" The symbol of the temple then represents the remnant of true believers who were destined to suffer for a given period due to their witnessing and refusal to accept the false teachings of Rome.

### **Trodden under foot 42 months**

The faithful remnant are also symbolically described in ch.11:2 as "the holy city". This holy city is described in chapter 21 of the Apocalypse, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband". This city is contrasted with another symbolic city called "Babylon" which represents the Roman system. It is referred to symbolically in Revelation as the city of Babylon and also as a number of beasts which represent different phases of its history. It will be shown later how the beasts in Revelation relate to the fourth beast of Daniel chapter 7, which in turn relates to the iron part of the image of Daniel chapter 2 which without doubt is Roman. This fourth beast in Daniel 7 develops "a little horn" or a power which is said to "wear out the saints of the most high, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." (Dan.7:25) The word for 'time' in the original is 'iddan' and according to Strong means 'a set time or a year'. Gesenius states 'time, specially a year'. Daniel states this power will wear out the saints for a time (one year), times (two years) and the dividing of time (half a year); in other words for three and a half years. This is the same period in time as 42 months, it is also the same as 1260 days in Jewish reckoning. So, according to Daniel, the little horn of the fourth beast which symbolizes the papacy wears out the saints for three and a half years (42 months) and the Apocalypse reveals "and the holy city they shall tread under foot forty and two months".

### **Where did the witnessing occur?**

Before identifying the time period when the saints witnessed and the period when the 'earth and woman' (protestants) witnessed it will help to determine where they witnessed. The witnessing comes to an end when they are killed by the beast. Verse eight states "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt where also our Lord was crucified". Logic suggests that they were witnessing in the same place ie the street of 'the great city'. This city is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. Concerning Sodom it is written in Gen.13:13 "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly" and concerning Egypt in Ex.13:3 "ye came out from Egypt out of the house of bondage" This symbolic city therefore is an exceeding wicked place where the faithful are in bondage, it is also described as the place 'where our Lord was crucified'. This feature suggests Jerusalem initially but this does not fit the other criteria: consider the following:- (1) If this is to be taken literally, was our Lord crucified in Sodom and Egypt? (2) There is no record of Jerusalem 'treading down' the saints after the first century, it was largely desolate and the Jews were scattered. (3) Jerusalem has already been identified along with the temple symbolically in this prophecy as the saints who are trodden under foot. (4) Rome has already been identified as the enemy of the witnesses.

How then was our Lord crucified in this symbolic city of Rome? Jesus was crucified by Romans, and Judaea, where he was literally crucified, was a province of Rome. This city then is

a symbol of the whole of the Roman empire where the true gospel was taught by the apostles and where the witnessing took place. The witnesses were slain in a street of the city ie part of the Roman Empire; history shows this to be France as will be shown later.

### **When did the witnessing occur?**

The year 312 has already been mentioned as the year Constantine made apostate Christianity the state religion of the whole western Roman empire and shortly afterwards the east also. This significant date marks the start of the witnessing period. The Chronicle records on page 251 (217DK) column 3 regarding Constantine *"His religious views changed radically in 312 when he was in Italy fighting Maxentius, the son of Maximian. Just before the battle he saw a cross of lights superimposed on the sun. From then on he identified the sun with the Christian God. He ordered his men to go into battle with Christian symbols painted on their shields. They quickly won a famous victory at the Milvian Bridge, just outside Rome, on the 28th October and Constantine became ruler of the West."* This seems a logical starting point for the witnessing of the true believers; their efforts in the main only brought ridicule and persecution, in other words they were "trodden under foot" as ch.11:2 states. Some of the details of this dreadful persecution are recorded in Bro. Ron Abel's book "Man of Sin".

The saints were trodden under foot for 42 months which is 1260 days. Using the day/year principle 1260 years, if this is added to 312 the end of the period will be 1572. Page 527 (463DK) records the headline *"Massacre on St Bartholomew's day, 15th August 1572"* The report goes on to say *"A most terrible massacre of Huguenots is taking place in Paris. It started just before dawn this morning, St. Bartholomew's day, when a band of Catholics burst into the house of Gaspard de Coligny, disembowelled him and threw him out of his bedroom window still alive. ....once the killing started the people of Paris, apparently overcome by bloodlust started a general massacre. It is still going on with men, women and children being slaughtered in their hundreds. There are reports that the killing is spreading to other towns. Henry of Navarre has been spared, but he was arrested at dawn, taken to the kings chamber and forced to abjure protestantism."*

The Huguenots were protestants as opposed to the true believers or Brethren in Christ. The former, although protesting against Rome, still had some false beliefs and they were also prepared to fight; whilst the latter, because of their witnessing were trodden under foot and therefore little is recorded in history about them. From 1572 onwards, witnessing by any surviving true Brethren in Christ would be much more difficult, particularly in France because of the determination of Catholic governments to destroy all 'heretics'.

### **The Earth and the Woman Witness**

It is not always easy to separate the witness of the saints or Brethren in Christ from the protestants when looking at history; however Rev.Ch.11 and Ch.12 make a distinction. The chart shows how the saints witness 42 months (ch.11:2) described in symbol as the temple and the holy city. This period has been described above. Ch.11:3 then describes a period of 1260 days when "my two witnesses" prophesy. Although the length of the period is the same as v.2, it is described differently because it is a different type of witness against the Catholics. This is purely a 'protestant' witness. Some expositors see these periods beginning and ending at the same time,

whilst others would 'stagger' the two periods as per the chart. Please note an error in the chart of one year, the period of witness for the earth and the woman should read 425 to 1685. The identity of the "earth" can be seen as the common people who became involved in the struggles between the papacy and the protestants; whilst the woman represented the protestant churches. They were not the bride of Christ who is a virgin, neither were they described as a whore (the papacy); they stood between these two extremes and were therefore described as a woman who joined forces with "the earth".

These witnesses are described in ch.11:3 as "my witnesses" which suggests they relate to the saints; this cannot be the case as verse 5 speaks of fire coming from their mouths to kill their enemies. It must be remembered that the nation of Israel were also described as being God's witnesses despite their corrupt and faithless ways. The protestants were in a similar position; they were the descendents of the spiritual sons and daughters of Abraham who had corrupted the doctrines and practices of the apostles. An important function of these witnesses was to unwittingly protect the true ecclesia to an extent from the worst persecution inflicted by Rome. This is why they were given power "to shut heaven that it rain not" and to "turn the waters into blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues". These are symbols which speak of warfare and the taking away of divine blessings. The history of the period speaks of wars between the papal powers in Europe and protestants. To give a typical example a map in the Chronicle for the year 1597 with the title "France during the Huguenot wars" shows half of the country under Catholic control, one third under Huguenot control with the remainder as disputed areas. The article below the map speaks of the "*religious wars*" and "*the long agony of France*".(p.558)

Verse four of chapter 11 gives more information about these two witnesses. "Two olive trees" and "two candlesticks" suggests a link with Zechariah 4, a close examination however reveals more differences than similarities as the table below shows.

Zechariah 4	Revelation 11
<u>One</u> lampstand "all gold" trees linked "golden oil" comes from trees they represent "anointed ones"	<u>Two</u> lampstands no gold trees not linked no mention of oil represent "two witnesses"

The witnesses in Rev.11 stand before "the God of the earth". The God of the earth here is the pope and his system, this can be seen in the description of the papacy given in 2 Thes.2:4 "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"

Returning to the year 312 when the saints began their witness, the church/state had little other opposition. The Chronicle has been quoted at the end of article number 3 to show how Constantine's "cleverly worded document" was instrumental in getting general agreement on church doctrine. Some of the 'Arians' were displeased and made their presence felt for a while but the Chronicle also records on page 256 (222DK) column 1 for the year 381 "*The new pro-Nicene emperor Theodosius summons an ecumenical council to Constantinople, at which Arianism is finally condemned once and for all. Gratian follows suit in the west*" The Donatists

also protested but they were more or less 'brushed aside' by Constantine and the church. It is around the year 425 that more problems arise for the church. The Chronicle on page 262 column 3 "*Nestorius was made patriarch (in Constantinople) in 425 by the emperor Theodosius II. An ascetic and intolerant man, he raised a storm in the church by preaching a new doctrine according to which there are two distinct natures in Christ. One is completely human, the other completely divine. The virgin is therefore only the mother of Christ not of God*" Nestorius was banished to Alexandria but not before he had a following. Soon after this Arianism also came to the fore again. Protestant "heresies" were witnessing against the state church but from within and at a political level. The Cambridge Medieval History volume 1 dates the accession of Nestorius as 428 in a chapter headed "Religious disunion in the fifth century". The chapter begins : "The importance of the religious controversies of the fifth century must strike the most casual reader of history ..... The antagonistic forces had been gathering to a head during the preceding period and they had to fight the battle out in the days that came after." Around the year 425 therefore seems a logical starting point for the protestant witness of the 'earth' and the 'woman'.

### **The end of the witnessing**

The witnessing became more intense and violent towards the end of the 16th century. The St. Bartholomew's day massacre in 1572 was an attempt to remove the Protestant 'torment' (ch.11:10); but it was not successful. The Chronicle records on page 526 (462) column 2 "*France 1573. Catherine de Medici makes peace with the Protestants, ending the fourth war of religion, which broke out after the St Bartholomew's day massacre.*" The fifth and sixth religious war occurred in 1576 and in 1580 "*The treaty of Fleix is signed ..... It ends the seventh French war of religion.*" For 1587 "*In the eighth war of religion, which began two years ago, Henry of Navarre defeats a Catholic army.. this latest Catholic - Huguenot conflict has developed into a struggle for the French succession*" In 1590 the Catholics suffer another defeat and for 1598 the following is recorded "*Henry IV can at last call himself king of France.... In April he signed the 'perpetual and irrevocable' edict of Nantes which granted Protestants freedom of conscience throughout the kingdom. .... they now have equal civil rights with the Catholics.*" This edict was aimed at creating peace between Protestants and Catholics. It did not work. Eventually in 1685 the Protestant movement in France (the street of the Roman city) was crushed. The Chronicle records on page 661 (585DK) "*Fountainbleau, 18 October 1685. King Louis XIV today revoked the edict of Nantes, signed by his father in 1598 and granting religious and political freedom to the Huguenots. The move is only the logical extension of the policies of the last four years, during which the edict has been ignored in practice. Louis is determined to stamp out Protestantism in France. ....Protestant worship is to be forbidden and the churches demolished. All citizens are being forced into Catholic baptism and marriage. Ministers who refuse to recant are being banished. .... Many Catholics are rejoicing today. The edict of Nantes did not abolish the fierce hatred existing between the two religious groups ..... Protestantism was a political threat to the monarchy while it existed.*"

### **Dead bodies in the street**

The year 1685 marked the end of Protestantism for a period in France; the edict of Fountainbleau also had a significant impact on neighbouring countries. The prophecy shows the witnessing ceased only for a period; shown in symbol as their dead bodies lying in the street,

after which a resurrection takes place. The dead bodies lie in the street for three and a half days (v.11). which presents another time period to identify. Using the day/year principle this would give three and a half years and bring the end of the period to 1688; this date in history does not appear to reveal any events to show a revival of Protestant witnessing. If however a lunar cycle is used in a day/year principle a very significant date appears to mark the end of this period. The earth turns once on its axis every 24 hours to give a period of one day and night. The moon turns once on its axis every 30 days. Using this formula, three and a half x 30 gives 105 days or 105 years to use the day/year principle. If 105 is added to 1685, the year 1790 marks the end of the period when the dead bodies lay in the street. 1790 marked the beginning of the French Revolution, the significance of which will be explained shortly: but first another question must be addressed.

Why change the formula for interpreting the prophecy from earth days to lunar days? To answer this question it will be helpful to remember that "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing ; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter" (Prov.25:2) If God can use the rotation of the earth as part of the key to understanding prophetic interpretation, why not the rotation of the moon? He created both sun and moon; he also created many other things which he then uses as symbols in prophecy.

### **The French Revolution**

The event is described in verse 13 as "a great earthquake" when a "tenth part of the city fell" (ie France) This is the second "great" earthquake in the prophecy which marks the end of the trumpet section and the beginning of the vials. This is shown in v.14 "The second woe is past; and behold the third woe cometh quickly". The impact of the French Revolution on both European and world history will be considered when looking at the vials. Thirty pages in the Chronicle are dominated by this event.

It is the impact of the Revolution on the witnessing which is of interest at this stage. The witnesses were killed by "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit" (v.7). This is the beast which John sees in another vision recorded in chapter 13:1 "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy". Referring to the chart in article 1, this is the sea beast which is later replaced by the earth beast. The earth and the woman witnessed against these beasts which represent different phases of the Roman world dominated by the papacy.

In ch.11:7 the beast kills the witnesses; their dead bodies lie in the "street" for 105 years, then "the spirit of God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet" (v.11) It is at the same time the earthquake of verse 13 takes place. The French Revolution brought an end to the monarchy in France which was closely linked with the papacy. This resulted in Protestants regaining respect and authority which had been lost 105 years earlier; this was their political 'ressurrection'. The Chronicle records the headline on page 759 (675DK) "*FRENCH CLERGY'S PROPERTY IS NATIONALISED*" The following report also states "*Paris, July 1790. 'The 'profane and scandalous' concordat with Rome has been abolished because, according to the politician the Count of Mirabeau, it was concluded 'between an immoral pope and a despot, without the knowledge of church or empire', in order to divide the rights and the gold of Frenchmen between*

*two usurpers*". A further report on page 769 (681DK) column 4 for the year 1791, records *"The social and economic impact of the revolution is being felt in every aspect of life. Actors, Jews and Protestants now officially enjoy full civil rights"*. The witnesses 'stood on their feet' and were invited to 'come up hither' (vs.11-12), they were invited into the political heavens again from whence they were deposed 105 years earlier in 1685.

The French Revolution resulted in political and religious freedom of speech and action, not only in France, but in the rest of Europe and many other parts of the world. Whilst this allows us as a body and individually to preach the truth, it also allows many other voices to be heard, the majority of which are of human origin and therefore in opposition to the will of God. These forces are at work today and are gathering the nations to the battle of the great day of God almighty. (Rev.16:14) In that great day, for the faithful of all ages who have earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints, the struggle will be over.

The subject of this article is Revelation Ch. 12. The first task is to fit the chapter into the historic framework of the Apocalypse. Chapter 11:1-14 deals with the witnesses against the Roman Church and covered the time period 312 - 1790; verse 14 showing that the second woe (6th trumpet) "is past: and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly". The remainder of chapter 11 is undoubtedly another of those kingdom visions given to strengthen the true believers. Chapter 12 is without doubt not referring to the kingdom, which means another step backwards in time has taken place. Chapter 12 deals with the same time period as chapter 11 but looking at a different aspect. Whilst chapter 11 concentrates on the witnesses, chapter 12 reveals details of the political events of the time. The principle symbols used in this chapter are a dragon, a woman and her man child. It will be helpful to briefly identify these symbols before proceeding any further.

## **The Dragon**

This dragon is described in verse 3. It has seven heads which are crowned and ten horns. It must be related to the beast in chapter 13:1 which also has 7 heads and 10 horns, here the horns are crowned. Chapter 13:11 reveals another beast with one head and two horns, John is told this beast is also related to the other beast in the same chapter. Chapter 17:3 also describes a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns. All these beasts represent different phases of the same power, that is the Roman power. This conclusion can be verified by turning to Daniel 7 where the fourth beast which also has ten horns is equated with the iron legs in the image of Daniel chapter 2. The horns on these beasts represent powers which cause the beasts to exercise authority whilst the heads represent different forms of government. These ideas will be expanded when considering chapter 13 of the Apocalypse. The dragon represents pagan Rome, the power which persecuted the saints from John's time until it was "cast out of heaven". The dragon is also described in the chapter as "that old serpent called the devil and Satan. Rome fulfilled this role during the time period of the prophecy just as Egypt did during the time described by Isaiah in Ch.27:1. :In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent..... he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea". Egypt was an adversary to God's people, Israel; see Ezek.29:3-4. Pagan Rome was the great adversary to god's people, the saints until it was cast out of heaven. Rev.12:10

## **The Woman**

This woman is seen to be "in heaven", this must be in the political heaven because a war is in progress. This woman represents an apostasised form of the true first century believers.

The true church is shown in Scripture as the bride of the Lamb and as a virgin; see Rev.21:9, 2 Cor.11:2. The woman, no longer a virgin, has been corrupted and has accepted false teachings and practices. As a result, she was 'with child'. This child took 280 day/years to be formed in the woman, 280 days is the normal gestation period for humans. It cannot be just coincidence that from the ministry of Christ (AD 30-33) to the time when Constantine proclaimed Christianity, the state religion, is 280 years. Paul warned the first century ecclesia at Thessalonica that the mystery of iniquity was already at work. In the same chapter he shows that this man child would develop into a "man of sin". Once born this child gradually developed into the system which Paul describes the 'man of sin' who would oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God. (2 Thes. 2.)

## **The Man Child**

This man child who had been gradually forming within the woman, once born was now visible for all to see. Christianity was now the state religion and Constantine was its first ruler.

Some have identified this man child with Christ for a number of reasons as follows.

(1) He was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, this phrase is used elsewhere of Christ. Whilst this is undoubtedly true it does not prove that Christ is being referred to. Other kings have ruled with a rod of iron as history records. A similar phrase is used of Rome in Dan.2:40 "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron breaketh all these, it shall break in pieces and bruise". This verse is stating that Rome will rule with a rod of iron; furthermore, Daniel repeats the information in ch.7:19.

This man child was to rule with a rod of iron: this is the only way in which he was to achieve power; no other qualities of rulership are mentioned. The reign of Christ will be poor if this is to be the only way he achieves power. Isaiah 11 reveals how he will reign "And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD..... With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" The only recipients of "the rod of his mouth" are the wicked. The man child of Rev.12 knows only a "rod of iron" which is used to wield power regardless of any distinction between righteous and wicked.

(2) He was caught up to God and his throne (Rev.12:5) This phrase cannot refer to the ascension of Christ as he was already in heaven before the prophecy was given. It must also be remembered that 'heaven' in this chapter is not literal but symbolic of the political heaven. Similar language is used about the king of Babylon "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isa.14:13) This verse is stating that the king of Babylon and his successors would gain ascendancy over all other nations. Incidentally Babylon also ruled with a rod of iron; the two facets go together.

(3) It has been suggested that the woman is Israel who was to bring forth the man child, Christ. This presents two difficulties. Firstly, the Apocalypse is about "things which must shortly come to pass", not about things which had already happened. Secondly, it has already been established that the nation of Israel did not exist when the Apocalypse was given. The prophecy was given to the faithful saints of the first century onwards; it begins with letters to the ecclesias in Asia, no mention of Israel.

The man child who ruled all nations with a rod of iron was Constantine. He was given the title 'The Great', a title given to very few rulers. He was victorious over his enemies both within and outwith the empire.

### **War in Heaven**

Before looking at more of the detail in chapter 12 it is worth noting that the events of chapters 11 & 12 give more detail about the period beginning with the sixth seal. The great earthquake of the sixth seal is a result of the war in heaven described in chapter 12. John sees a woman in heaven: "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet" This woman is firmly in the political heaven and paganism is about to be evicted: here is another link with the sixth seal, see Rev.6:12-14.

The phrase 'War in heaven' indicates more than just a single battle, which is in fact the case. In the year 311 the empire was divided amongst four emperors. Constantine ruled in Britain and Gaul. He favoured the 'Christians'; Maxentius, a Pagan ruler controlled Italy, Spain and Africa. Licinius, who was indifferent to the 'Christians', controlled Illyricum, Greece and Thrace; Maximin held everything to the east of the Bosphorus, he was a cruel and malicious enemy of the 'Christians'. In an effort to rid the empire of 'Christians' the two Pagan rulers (Maxentius and Maximin) agreed to crush Constantine and Licinius. Constantine did not wait to be crushed, he acted first and convincingly defeated Maxentius in a series of battles making him master of the west. This left three divisions in the empire. Constantine and Licinius now unite and issue an edict of toleration for every man to choose his religion. The sister of Constantine, Constantia was given in marriage to Licinius, but the wedding festivities were rudely interrupted by the news that the pagan ruler Maximin had invaded the territory of Licinius with brilliant success. Thus the tail of the pagan dragon casts the third part of the stars of heaven to the earth. Maximin's intention was also to destroy the man child, Constantine. (see Rev.12:4) The victories of Maximin were short lived and Licinius regained his former territories and went on to become sole ruler in the east. The historical details in this paragraph are taken from 'The Cambridge Medieval History Vol.1 pages 3-6.

### **Michael fights the Dragon**

Chapter 12:7-9 give more detail about this war in heaven. The two parties are now described as Michael and his angels on the one side and the Dragon and his angels on the other. How can Constantine be Michael? In Daniel 12 Michael is described as "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people" For a brief period Constantine fulfilled this role: the true followers of Christ were relieved from oppression as the edict of Milan gave men of all religions the right to worship. The name Michael is a Hebrew word meaning 'who is like el'; the power given to Constantine to perform the divine will was indeed great but it was also temporary.

## **Now is come salvation**

The language of verses 10 & 11 looks like the language describing the kingdom when Christ and the saints are ruling. This cannot be the case for the following reasons.

(1) Verse 12 states "Therefore (i.e. because of verses 9 & 10) rejoice ye heavens and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath". How can this apply to the kingdom when Christ is victorious with the saints? In the interpretation given so far this is a further reference to the Pagan ruler Maximin who invaded the territories of Licinius but was quickly driven back and destroyed.

(2) Verse 17 records "And the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" Those who keep the commandments of God will not be "a remnant" in the kingdom age, they will be "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred's, and people, and tongues" (Rev.7:9)

(3) In the kingdom the dragon will be "bound" until the end of the millennium, but in chapter 12 the dragon is cast out of heaven but can still exert influence in the earth. This influence is such that the woman flees from the dragon.

What then are verses 10 & 11 referring to? "Now is come salvation" was the cry of the woman, now in heaven, she had been saved from the persecution of Diocletian symbolised in the 5th seal by the souls under the altar. Bryce states on page 10 of his book on the Holy Roman Empire that the Church was "Suddenly called from danger and ignominy to the seat of power". It is worth noting that in John's vision, the cry came not from heaven where God and the immortal Christ dwell but from the political heaven; this is exactly what happened. From this time forward the new state church believed and proclaimed itself to be the kingdom of God on earth, a teaching which both Catholic and Protestant churches believe to this day. Gibbon makes the following comment about Constantine "His vanity was gratified by the flattering assurance that he had been chosen by heaven to reign over the earth : success had justified his divine title to the throne, and that title was founded on the truth of the Christian revelation" (Constantine asserted that Christ had appeared to him in a dream at the time of his famous victory at the battle of Milvain bridge).

## **They overcame by the blood of the lamb**

The Cambridge Medieval History says concerning Constantine's wars in 312 "This short campaign - the most brilliant feat of arms since Aurelian's time - was an epoch for Constantine himself. To it belongs the story of the shining cross. Somewhere between Colmar and Saxa Ruba he saw in the sky one afternoon a bright cross with the words 'Hoc vince', and the army saw it too; and in a dream that night Christ bade him take it for his standard" From this time onwards he replaced the symbol of the dragon with the symbol of the cross. The Christians believed they had been elevated to power through Christ's victory over sin on the cross.

## **The Woman in the Wilderness**

A dramatic change had taken place for the 'Christians'; no longer persecuted and downtrodden, with their new champion 'man child', many were now in positions of power and responsibility. However Rev.12 speaks of the woman fleeing into the wilderness: this is also found to be in harmony with the facts. In the book 'The first five centuries of Christianity' by Moffat, he states on page 100 "But on the whole, after 330 persecution of the Church gave place to persecution by the Church, directed against recalcitrant pagans or against sectaries and heretics". The Christian 'woman', now in power, began to change into the 'Harlot' described later in the Apocolypse. Those who opposed were simply banished to the extremities of the empire. Initially this was done in relatively small numbers but Moffat records on page 102 "a century later Christians were flocking to the deserts to live the simple life alone or in groups. Thus began the hermits and the monks, who were to play so great and grave a role during the Christian movement of the following centuries".

Thus the 'woman' flees this state church she helped to create, it is greedy for power and cares little about truth: it is now beginning to develop into the harlot mentioned later in the Apocalypse. The woman can now be identified with the witnesses of chapter 11. She flees into the wilderness (12:6) for 1260 day/years as foretold in both chapters 11 and 12.

## **The woman flees from the dragon**

Reference has already been made to the fact of the woman fleeing into the wilderness as a result of Christianity being the state religion (v.6). The prophecy also records in verses 13-14 that the woman is also persecuted by the dragon, also called the serpent in verse 15. This did occur during the battles between the wars between Constantine and the Pagan rulers Maxentius and Maximin. This however was a short period lasting nowhere near the 1260 years required by the prophecy. This difficulty disappears when it is seen that the new state 'Christian' church adopts Pagan beliefs and thus takes the role of the Pagan Dragon.

The Cambridge Medieval History records on page 569 "It would however be a grave mistake to suppose that the age which saw the triumph of the Christian idea and the establishment of Christianity as the state religion was entirely of one mind and Christian to the core. Side by side with the great current of Christian thought and belief, that was now running free after a long subterranean course, there flowed a large volume of purely pagan opinion or preconception, such infiltration as took place being carried on by unseen channels. Thus while eager and courageous spirits were contending for the faith with all kinds of weapons against all kinds of foes throughout the empire, men (and some of them Christian men) were writing and speaking as though no such thing as Christianity had come into the world." This state church was about as far removed from the teachings of Christ as it was possible to be; the Cambridge History goes on to say that "Christianity when it conquered the heathen world was captured by the system of education which it found in force." The system of education it states "was pagan to the end".

The Protestant witness against the "state church" lasted 1260 years during which time those who protested (or witnessed Chapter 11) were in "the wilderness" or banished to the "wings" or extremities of the empire. The dragon also made war with the true followers of Christ (v.17) as it saw little difference between them and the Protestants.

## The earth helps the woman.

The prophecy shows how the earth helps the woman by swallowing up the flood which comes from the mouth of the dragon (v.16). The dragon tries to drown the woman with a flood of water. This symbol is used in the Old Testament in relation to the armies of a king who destroy their enemies. (See Jer.46:7-8 & Isa.8:7) The flood is repelled by the 'earth' which represents the peoples of the empire who are subject to the rulers who in turn are represented by the sun, moon and stars. Examples can be seen at various times when this symbology is in line with history. The woman or the Protestants can be seen in communities like the Donatists who were persecuted by Rome but received sympathy from those who were prepared to fight against Rome because they were opposed to the suppression of liberty.

The table below shows the meanings of the different symbols used in chapter 12

<b>SYMBOL</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
Heaven	v's 1,3,4,7 etc	Political heaven (Ruling power of the Roman Empire)
Woman	v's 1,2,4,5 etc	The church in the 3rd century which had become corrupt in both doctrine and practice.
Dragon	v's 3,4,7,9,13	The Pagan Roman Empire
Dragon	v.17	The nominally 'Christian' government of the empire which accepted the beliefs & ideas of Paganism.
Man child	v's 4,5	Constantine and the system he created which gradually developed into a 'man of sin' (2 Thes.2) i.e. The Papacy
Michael	v.7	The all powerful Constantine who relieved the persecution of true believers
The Earth	v.16	People in the empire who helped the Protestants, they were prepared to fight for civil liberty.
The Serpent The Devil Satan	v.9	Terms synonymous with the Dragon

Note.

Reference has not been made in this article to the 'Chronicle of the world'. The time period of this chapter is concurrent with the sixth seal (article 3) and the witnesses (article 6); the Chronicle is used in these articles.

This article will consider the three beasts who appear in Rev.Chapter 13. These are the beast who arises from the sea (v.1), the beast of the earth (v.11) and the dragon (v.4) which also figured in chapter 12. This chapter also describes an 'image of the beast' (v.14) which is closely connected with the beast. As on other occasions it may be helpful to give the identity of these beasts before considering the details. In article 7 the link was made between the dragon and the fourth beast in Daniel 7. As the chart below shows, all these are related and show different aspects of the Roman empire. The chart also shows a latter day manifestation of the same power described in chapter 17. This will be considered in a later article.

Reference	Beast	Heads	Horns	Identification
Dan.7: 7,23	4th Beast	1	10	Rome in all its phases [750B.C. - 20th Century]
Rev.12: 3	Great Red Dragon	7 (Crowned)	10	A Civil & Military power - Pagan Roman Empire until "Chritainized" by Constantine who then ruled from Constantinople [750 B.C. - 20th Century]
Rev.13: 1-10	Beast of the Sea	7	10 (Crowned)	Papacy in Rome & 10 Barbarian Kingdoms within the empire. Power from dragon (Emperor in Constantinople)[324 - 530 A.D.]
Rev.13: 8-11	Beast of the Earth	1	2	Holy Roman Empire [800 1800 A.D] Horns = King & Pope
Rev.17: 3, & 11-14	Scarlet Coloured Beast	7	10	Europe controlled by Rome in war with Christ & the saints

### The Great Red Dragon

The dragon is described in Ch.12:9 as "that old serpent called the devil, and satan, which deceiveth the whole world". The language here obviously echoes Genenis 3 where the serpent decieved the woman. This power has continued to deceive since the days of Eden and will do so untill it is finally destroyed at the end of the millenium (Rev.20). The symbol of the dragon is applied to Babylon (Jer.51:34) to Egypt (Isa.27:1) and indeed all nations who were instrumental in both decieving Israel it into the worship of pagan gods and also oppressing it.(Ps.44:19) The dragon in Revelation symbolises the power which accomplishes these roles in relation to the saints. As shown in the previous article, Pagan Rome seduced an apostate church to accept its ideas and beliefs, it also persecuted those who opposed its beliefs and practices; both protestants and the true believers.

The capital of the dragon power was Rome untill Constantine as sole ruler of the empire moved his capital to Constantinople as it came to be known. This move was the beginning of the two legs of the image in Daniel Chapter 2, known in history as the eastern and western parts of the empire. The main military power remained with Constantine and his successors in the east,

whilst the religious power of the Papacy began to develop in the west. Regarding the move of Constantine from west to east the Chronicle records on page 253 (219DK). *"Constantinople, 11 May 330. The Roman Empire, for so long centered on the town after which it is named, has a new capital: Constantinople, named after the emperor Constantine and built over the ancient city of Byzantium. The new capital is ideally situated. It stands on the Bosphorous, the crossroads of Europe and Asia, of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, and of many land and sea routes. The geographical move is also a religious one: the new city, its magnificent churches resplendent with masterpieces imported from every land, will be a truly Christian capital. Only its government duplicates that of Rome.* Constantine intended his new religion to have its centre in his capital; the clerics in Rome however had other ideas.

## **The Beast from the Sea.**

In Rev.13:1 John records the emerging of another beast "out of the sea"; the sea is symbolic of the nations in prophecy, see Isa.57:20, Jer.51:42. This beast also has 7 heads and ten horns suggesting a close connection with the dragon, both beasts are Roman. The sea beast being in the west with dragon in the east. Further links with Daniel Ch.7 emerge with the description of this beast in verse two; it was "like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion". Daniel records these animals as representing Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. As each of these nations in turn subdued its predecessor, elements of the nation subdued were absorbed by the conquering nation, thus elements of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece are all found in the Roman system.

## **Seven Heads**

The beast has seven heads which can be identified with the different forms of government used by the Romans during its history. These are as follows:-

### **1. REGAL**

The Chronicle records on page 80 (68DK) for the year 716 BC about *"Romulus the legendary founder and first king of Rome"*. Regarding the last king of Rome it states on page 106 (90DK) in the year 510 BC *"Rioting and demonstrations rocked Rome today ..... Tarquinius Superbus, the seventh king of Rome, has fled the city and a republic is about to be declared"*. (The name republic is derived from the two words 'real public') This lasted nearly 5 centuries. During this period the form of government underwent several changes as shown below.

### **2. CONSULAR**

At first executive authority was vested in two consuls. A senate acted as an advisory and legislative authority, while the machinery of government provided for all classes of society to have a control in public affairs. It was not long before a struggle broke out between the nobles and the common people (The Patricians and the Plebeians.) The Chronicle records on page 110 (94DK) for the year 494 BC. *The entire future of republican Rome hung on a knife edge today as plebeians, who make up more than 90% of the population of Rome, withdrew to the Aventine, a working class stronghold outside the city. The plebs were protesting against the 'weighting' of voting rights which gave the well to do patricians far greater power than themselves in the*

*assembly.*" The struggle became so violent that it became necessary for a period to place the supreme power of Rome in the hands of one person.

### 3. DICTATORIAL

This gave rise to Rome being ruled by a Dictator. The struggle between Patricians and Plebeians continued to increase, until it was decided to revise the laws of Rome.

### 4. DECEMVIRAL

Ten men (decemviri) journeyed to Greece to study the laws in force there. On their return they revised the constitution and wrote new laws on ten (later revised to twelve) tables. The Decemvirs were vested with authority to rule.

### 5. TRIBUNITIAL

A revolution drove out Appius Claudius, one of the Decemvirs, and a return was made to a different form of consular government. By this time the Plebeians had increased their power, their Tribunes or representatives. These Tribunes gradually increased in power until they obtained consular power and authority. This occurred just before the great conquests which carried Rome into barbaric countries. These wars resulted in generals in charge of the armies exercising political powers.

### 6. IMPERIAL

Finally the senate accepted one general, Julius Caesar as emperor for life. The republic was now ended. It was during this period the Apostle John received the Apocalyptic visions on the Isle of Patmos.

### 7. GOTHIC

As a result of invasions from barbaric nations, the western part of the empire was ruled by the Goths for a 60 year period. This period is the subject of the fourth trumpet (Ch.8:12) After this period Rome became Imperial again ie The sixth head was healed (Rev.13:3)

### **Ten Horns**

The existence of the barbarian nations in the Roman empire is shown by the ten horns on the beast who for a period were in control of the western part of the empire. This is shown in symbol as the horns, not the heads being crowned (13:1). The question arises, what is the significance of 'ten' horns. It is possible to identify a time when ten nations had invaded the territory of the Western Roman empire during the period of the first four trumpets. There were also times when more or less than ten barbarian nations were involved. It is therefore true to say that ten could be taken as an average number to represent the powers (horns) which exerted authority in the Roman earth.

It was during this period the power of Rome was weakened but not destroyed. Its survival was due in part to help it received from Constantinople. This is seen in the prophecy, verse 4 speaks of the dragon giving power to the beast. Some brief examples of this are taken from page 274 (236DK) of the Chronicle. "*The Ostrogothic king, Totila, captures Rome after a year's siege. The city has been deserted by all but 500 of its civilian inhabitants*". But for the following year: "*Belisarius, the Byzantine general, reoccupies and repairs the defences of the deserted city of Rome*".

In the year 550 the armies of Constantinople were recalled from Rome due to lack of resources; this resulted in another conquest by the Ostrogoths. Then, in 552, “Justinian finally responds to the crisis in Italy by sending out a huge force led by Narses. He defeats and kills Totila”. Without help from Constantinople, Rome would have fallen into the hands of the barbarians. Prophecy, however, required the barbarians to be powers (horns) on the Roman beast for a period of time, and not to completely overwhelm it.

### Blasphemy against God

Another aspect of this beast is its blasphemy against God and its making war with the saints. As the chart in the first article shows, the seeds of the Papacy were sown early in the fourth century in the days of Constantine when 'Church and state' were united. Religion was used to gain victory over the people and the bishops of Rome gradually increased their power. Reference can be seen in verses 6-7 of the 42 month period of blasphemy and war against the saints linking yet again with Daniel 7:25 and the period of witnessing recorded in Rev.11. This time period was considered when looking at the witnesses. The table below is taken from Bro. Carters "Times and Seasons"; it shows a number of significant dates relating to the rise and the decline of papal power. It will be noted that 1793-533 = 1260, 1799-539 = 1260 etc. [42 months (v.5) = 1260 day/years] The table shows it is possible to identify no less than seven concurrent periods relating to the rise and fall of this power. This prophecy is not unique in this respect, what a testimony this is to the one who knows the end from the beginning.

#### 1260 years from the rise to the fall of the Papacy

AD	RISE	AD	DECLINE
533	Justinian acknowledges pope as universal bishop	1793	French Revolution - Papal power to persecute is broken
539	Ravenna re-conquered - Papal power increases	1799	Napoleonic wars against Catholic Europe and Papacy
549	Justinian's Sanction gives pope control of Municipal & Provincial governments	1809	Napoleon annexes Papal States
590	Gregory I - New era for Papacy	1850	Pious IX driven into exile
600	Gregory's popedom reaches its zenith	1860	Two thirds of Papal States lost to Italy
604	Death of Gregory	1864	French prepare to abandon Papacy
608	Decree of Phocas, Justinian's decree confirmed re. Pope's universal bishoprick	1868	End of temporal power of Papacy, Rome becomes capital of Italian Kingdom.

### The Beast of the Earth

John's attention is next focused on another beast which arises from the earth, it is in fact another phase of the same power; changes in the western Roman empire are shown in the prophecy as another beast. The main reason for the changes lay in the deep rift which had occurred between Rome and Constantinople over the use of Images in the church. This lead

to a division, the Greek orthodox church was established independent of the Roman Catholic Church. Rome could no longer rely on military help from Constantinople and hostile Barbarian nations were still on the territory of the west. The Pope had to find military aid from elsewhere in order to survive as Rome was threatened by the Lombards and also by a new power in the region.

The Arabs who had swept along the coast of North Africa in a victorious fashion were now in Spain and threatened to destroy the western part of the empire. They were stopped by the Frankish general Charles Martel at Poitiers in 732. The Pope saw in Martel a possible protector. The Chronicle records on page 296 (256DK) "*Rome 739. The Pope vainly appeals to Charles Martel for help against the expansionist policies of Liutprand, king of the Lombards*"

The Pope was successful a few years later, page 298 (258DK) for the year 754 records "*Pope Stephen 11, and King Pepin 111 of Gaul, son of Charles Martel, have concluded a treaty that is expected to have far reaching effects..... Under the treaty Pepin the short, as he is known, has vowed to give 23 towns (held by the Lombards) in central and Northern Italy to the Pope..... In return a new Dynasty of Frankish kings has been given the legitimacy it craves..... in 751 the Pope authorised the ousting of the last Merovingian king in favour of Pepin*" This alliance was further strengthened in the year 800 as the Chronicle reports on page 305 (265DK) "*On this Christmas Day, when mass was finishing in St. Peters, Rome Pope Leo 111 suddenly produced a crown and, placing it on the head of Charlemagne, the king of the Franks, who was kneeling before the high altar, proclaimed him emperor of the Romans. The Roman notables there assembled cried in unison 'To Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned by God, the great and peaceloving emperor, life and victory' "*

### **The Holy Roman Empire**

Thus came into being what history calls the Holy Roman Empire and the Apocalypse describes as the beast of the earth. The territory of its predecessor was nearer the Mediterranean regions and was therefore called 'The Beast of the Sea'. The territory of this new beast was further North in the central land mass of Europe, hence the title 'Beast of the Earth'. This beast had two horns (Pope and Emperor) and "he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him" (13:12). The word "before" means 'in the face or presence of'. The horn powers were still in existence, thus the sea beast was established in the presence of the nations who had previously invaded the empire; history shows this to be correct.

The whole of the Roman world is now symbolised by three beasts existing at the same time; the Dragon with its capital in Constantinople, the sea beast centered in Rome and the earth beast with a capital in central Europe. This capital moved from time to time depending upon the dominant country whose ruler cooperated with the Pope to give him his military power.

The power for the papacy originally came from Constantinople, but now from the earth beast in Europe. This beast "doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men" (v.13). Fire is the symbol of war and destruction (see Gen.19:24, Ps.11:6, Isa.1:7) A typical example of this is seen in the wars of Charlemagne

who subdued the majority of western Europe and enforced the Roman 'Christian' religion in these areas.

The earth beast had the aspect of a lamb and a dragon, it was nominally 'Christian' but it was in reality the old pagan Roman system with all its idolatry and witchcraft. Its two horns, Emperor and Pope profess to be Christian and were able to "deceive them that dwell on the earth" (v.14) to worship Christ's supposed representative on earth, the Pope.

### **The image of the beast**

The common people in the empire were deceived into worshipping this political/religious system. In the 'Holy Roman Empire' by J.V. Bryce, a chapter entitled 'Theory of the Mediaeval Empire' reveals how this deception was enacted by the church using scripture. They taught that 'AntiChrist' would follow the Roman system; therefore any weakening of the empire would "hasten the coming of the enemy and the end of the world" (p.112). Regarding their use of scripture and the way in which context was ignored Bryce states on page 113

"No analogy was too faint, no allegory too fanciful, to be drawn out of a simple text; and, once propounded, the interpretation acquired in argument all the authority of the text itself. Melchizedek is both priest and king; therefore the Pope has regal as well as ecclesiastical authority. The two swords of which Christ said, 'It is enough,' are the spiritual and temporal powers, and the grant of the spiritual to Peter involves the supremacy of the Papacy. Thus one writer proves the eternity of Rome from the seventy second Psalm 'They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations'; the moon being of course, since Gregory VII, the Roman Empire, as the sun, or greater light, is the Popedom."

He concludes the chapter by saying "its genius was clerical rather than territorial..... it rested not on armed hosts or wide lands, but on the duty, the awe, the love of its subjects." The Papacy was thus held in awe and worshipped like an image or idol by the people of the earth. As Bryce states the Papacy did not require armed hosts to rule its subjects, but it did to subdue its enemies and it did not hesitate to use them, as verse 15 records.

### **No man might buy or sell**

The church/state system was very powerful and those who it saw as heretics were outcasts, both socially and in commerce. The phrase 'buy or sell', however, has another meaning which is of greater importance. When Isaiah addressed his contemporaries he said "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa.55:1) What a contrast to the church of Rome which for centuries has used its spiritual 'merchandise' as a source of great gain; much of its riches have been extracted from the poor, but this does not deter from taking even more. The iniquity of the system is without bounds, for what does it give to its subjects in return? The answer to that question must surely be nothing but lies, for it does not know the truth. Isaiah went on to say "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you,

even the sure mercies of David." The Papacy takes from the people and gives nothing in return, it seeks to hide the true riches by banning or burning the word of God, or by insisting the Church must interpret it. The sign mentioned in verse 16 must surely be the sign of the cross which is placed on the foreheads of infants at 'baptism'; on the right hands of priests in ordination. It is seen on buildings, worn by millions, it has even been used as a military badge. It is referred to by the church as 'The blessed cross' whereas the scriptures call 'the tree' cursed. (Gal.3:13)

### The number of the Beast

The number 666 can be identified with the Papacy using two independent methods as shown below, by using the numerical values in both greek and latin letters.

1. Using the numerical value of Roman (Latin) letters	V	5
	I	1
The phrase 'VICARIUS FILII DEI' which means "Vicar of the son of God"	C	100
	A	
	R	
This inscription was written on the tripple tiara worn by the Pope.	I	1
	V	5
	S	
The triple tiara appears on the reverse of a medallion struck in 1979 to commemorate the visit of the present Pope to Boston, America.	F	
	I	1
	L	100
	I	1
	I	1
NB Not all latin letters have numeric values.	D	500
	EI	1
		<u>666</u>
2. Using the numerical value of Greek letters.	L	30
	A	1
The word 'LATEINOS' which means 'Latin Kingdom'	T	300
	E	5
This was recognised as far back as Iranius who was a disciple of Polycarp. Polycarp was contemporary with the apostle John.	I	10
	N	50
	O	70
	S	200
		<u>666</u>

This power which has for so long been the great enemy of God and the saints, and the great deceiver of the people is the power "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

The main object of this article is to look at the period of the vials. This period is of particular importance to disciples in the twentieth century, as we are living in the period of the sixth vial. Before commencing a consideration of the vial period, it will be useful again at this stage to briefly recap the study so far with the aid of the main chart in the first article. The study commenced by looking at the period of the seals which unfold the divine purpose within the Roman world and the saints who live in it from the end of the first century, when the vision was given to the beginning of the fourth century, when Constantine turned the empire into a paganised form of Christianity. This is followed by the trumpet period when God summons various nations at the sound of each trumpet to invade the western part of the empire, then the eastern part resulting in its collapse with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. At this stage the Apocalypse does not continue with the vial period but gives more detail about the trumpet period by considering the witnesses who protested in various ways against the false Christianity in the empire. Further detail is then given in chapter 12 regarding political events in both the West and the East. This was done by looking at the various beasts which emerged. Having considered these details, the Revelation now continues with the vial periods.

### **Future glory**

It must also be remembered that at the commencement of the section, John was given a vision of the millennial reign of Christ and the saints. A principle is used here which is seen elsewhere in the scriptures; the end result is displayed first, then are revealed some of the details which lead up to glorious triumph of good over evil. To use some of the symbols given in the Apocalypse, it is the triumph of Jerusalem over Babylon, is the triumph of the Lamb and his bride over the great red dragon and the whore, it is the triumph of saints who have been "trodden under foot" over the kings of the earth who persecuted the saints. When humans speak of the future; they begin with the present, dealing with known events and tentatively move forward. The Apocalypse was given by one who knows with absolute certainty the end from beginning, he is able therefore to strengthen those who "have ears to hear" with a vision of future glory before revealing a few more of the sad details of how sin is to be destroyed. These visions are surely designed to strengthen the true believer in this present evil world. The late Bro. C.C. Walker's hymn (238) which is based on one of these visions expresses their purpose;

"Hear him cheering thee my brother'  
Whatsoe'ere thy present pain.  
Not to be compared the suffering  
With the glory thou shalt gain  
In the kingdom of the Father,  
In the Son's immortal reign."

Such a vision is seen in Rev. chapter 15 where the redeemed "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." It is in the same vision that seven angels are given "seven golden vials full of the wrath of God". Chapter 16:1 reveals "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth."

### **First Vial (Rev.16:2)**

"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image". The language here is obviously describing the same power mentioned in Ch.13:14-17 ie the beast of the earth which has been identified as the Holy Roman Empire. The events of this vial bring judgment on this system in the form of a grievous sore or ulcer. The ulcer upon the beast was in France; the aftermath of the French revolution changed the face of Europe. One effect of the revolution and events that followed was to bring to an end the remarkable power held by the Papacy. This has already been noted when considering the great earthquake in Ch.11:13. Space permits only a few headlines from the Chronicle to give a flavour of how the revolution stirred up France against the rest of Europe.

*"1793 French cut off the head of their king" p.775 (689DK)*

*"1793, Terror is firmly on the agenda in France" p.781 (693DK)*

*"1794, French revolution finds echoes in Europe" p.787 (699DK)*

*"1795, New Dutch republic submits to France" p.789 (701DK)*

*"France extends rule over Italian republics" p.793 (705DK)*

### **Second Vial (Rev. 16:3)**

"And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea". A similar pattern emerges here as seen with the trumpets. The first trumpet affected the earth, the second trumpet affected the sea, the third affected the rivers and the fourth caused a political eclipse. During the second vial, the maritime power of the beast was strangled by Britain who became 'ruler of the waves'. Napoleon was no match for Britain when it came to naval warfare; in 1805 his plan was to invade England by crossing the channel. This invasion never took place but the same year the Chronicle records on page 811 (721DK) *"French loose at Trafalgar"* A similar headline appears on page 797 (709DK) for the year 1798 *"Nelson smashes French Navy off Aboukir"*. During this period the British destroyed well over 1,000 ships.

### **Third Vial (Rev.16:4-7)**

"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became as blood". As in the third trumpet the regions around the great rivers of Europe suffered from the ravages of Atilla, now it is the turn of Napoleon to affect the same areas as the following headlines from the Chronicle show.

*"1794, French get Austrian army on the run" p.785 (697DK)*

*"1797, Austria surrenders to Bonaparte in Italy" p.795 (707DK)*

*"1813, Europe is now Napoleon's family business"p.826 (734DK)*

Verses 5-7 in chapter 16 comment on God's judgments against the beast in the first 3 vials. "Thou art righteous O Lord, which art , and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy". Many 'Christians' are embarrassed by the way in which the Old Testament portrays God as a God of vengeance and judgment. They have therefore discarded the foundation of the gospel because it does not suit their human thinking. They want a God who is full of mercy and forgiveness, and this is what they have invented for themselves; thinking the New Testament supports their one sided view of God. The truth of the matter as can be seen from the passage under consideration is that God is right to judge thus, his ways are true and holy or separate from the thinking of the flesh and therefore will bring lasting peace to the earth. That time is reserved for the time of the vision already mentioned in ch.15:4 "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee: for thy judgments are made manifest." These principles are echoed in ch.16:7 from "the altar... Even so Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments". The altar as seen in ch.6:9-11 represents the cry of the faithful, many of whom were slain for their testimony to truth. As in the case of righteous able, although he was dead his blood cried to God from the ground for righteous judgment. (Gen.4:10)

#### **Fourth Vial (Rev.16:8-9)**

"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given him to scorch men with fire". The sun as shown in previous examples represents the ruler or rulers of the day. Rulers in various parts of Europe were deposed by Napoleon as he ravaged the territory of the beast. These judgments were ordained by God and carried out by Napoleon as one of the many rulers who have unwittingly advanced the decrees of heaven. Verse 9 speaks of these events and states how men refused to accept the working of the divine hand; but rather continue with the blasphemous worship associated with the beast which was the cause of the judgments. Of particular importance is the record on page 812 (722DK) of the Chronicle *"Germany, 1st August 1806. Napoleon gives notice to the emperor Francis II of the end of the Holy Roman empire"* and a few days later *"6th August 1806. The Holy Roman Emperor Francis II accepts Napoleon's ultimatum and resigns"* Thus one of the powers or horns of the two horned beast of the earth known as the Holy Roman empire was no more.

#### **Fifth Vial (Rev.16:10-11)**

"And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast" The seat of the beast is Rome where the other horn power was enthroned. The Chronicle records on page 817 (727DK) *"Rome, 6th July 1809. Pope Pius VII and his secretary, Cardinal Pacca, were arrested today on the orders of the French general, Radet, and sent to Grenoble."* So the other horn power of the beast was deposed. As in the previous vial; despite the hardships imposed because of war, men still refused to repent of their evil deeds. They continued to practice Catholicism with all its idolatry and blasphemy. Napoleon had now performed the task required by prophecy and in executing it he was victorious. When however he tried to exceed his role and attempt to invade Russia, he is soundly defeated by different forces controlled by the angels. The heading on page 825 (733) of the Chronicle reads *"Russian winter drives out Napoleon"*

## **Sixth Vial (Rev.16:12-16)**

The events of this vial are of the utmost importance to believers today, everything considered so far in this study, with the exception of a brief glimpse or two of the kingdom, is history. It confirms to the faithful the wonderful works of God, but it is now in the past. The sixth vial is neither in the past or the future; it concerns the present and it contains the warning "Behold I come as a thief". It is the only section in the Apocalypse to be fulfilled before the return of the Lord from heaven, furthermore, some of the events within the sixth vial are past which means we are living towards the end of the period. There are three main sections within the vial period.

### **(1) The drying up of the Euphrates**

It was in the period of the sixth trumpet the angels were loosed in the great river Euphrates which symbolized the great expansion of the Turks. During the sixth vial the reverse occurs. From 1820 onwards Turkey became known as the 'sick man of Europe'. It lost Greece, Southern Russia, Northern Africa and Palestine. The prophecy gives the reason for the 'drying up' of the Turkish power, it was "that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared". The word 'east' here means 'rising of the sun' and has reference to Christ and the saints. "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his beams"(Mal.4:2). Amidst all the gloom and warfare of the vial period here is a ray of glorious hope. God does not work in a way which is haphazard, everything is ordered and well prepared. Specific preparations for the arrival of the "Sun of righteousness" began in 1917, the Chronicle records on page 1066 (952DK) "*Jerusalem. The Ottoman commander of the Holy City has surrendered to General Edmund Allenby. The news has been welcomed by Jewish leaders and celebrated in London, where church bells rang out for the first time since the war began*" This was the single most significant event of the first world war and in less than a year of this event the war was over. As a side issue it is worth noting the second world war created another significant move in the middle east. Hitler's persecution of Jews caused them to return to Palestine in large numbers and in 1948 the state of Israel was set up; another significant step in the preparation for the return of the King of righteousness.

### **(2) Unclean spirits like frogs**

This section of the sixth vial returns to the effects of the French Revolution. The nation of France has been associated with the symbol of the frog since its early days. The first king of the Franks was Pharamond, (420 AD) the symbols on his shield of arms were three frogs. A medal of a frog was found in the tomb of Childeric I king of France and his son Clovis used the symbol of three frogs on his banner and his shield of arms. The French revolution took place over 200 years ago yet its effects are very much in evidence today throughout Europe and many other parts of the world. The Chronicle makes the following observations about this event on page 776 (This section is omitted from the Dorling Kindersly edition)

*"The French Revolution is always with us, not simply in the sense that it created the forms and categories of our own political culture but also in the way that every generation of historians and thinkers has to engage with and argue over this 'mythic' event. The myth from which all others flow is that the revolution saw the birth of a new order, that 1789 was the year zero of a new world founded on equality..... The declaration of the rights of man clearly defined liberty -*

*the right to do anything that did not harm others or conflict with their liberty.....The revolution has provided an inspiration for democracy and a model for totalitarianism”* No wonder the writer describes the event as a myth; Scripture teaches that every man doing that which is right in his own eyes does not create liberty but the very opposite. For Israel it resulted in Divine judgment, captivity and death; and it will ultimately for this latter day generation.

The revolution was a product of the so called 'age of enlightenment. Regarding this the Chronicle states on page 762 (Not in DK) *"The great intellectual and cultural awakening of the 18th century is known as the Enlightenment - but what was this light which was illuminating Europe? It was 'reason'. All the various intellectuals, men of letters, scientists and administrators - both Catholic and Protestant, pious and atheistical - who saw themselves as 'enlightened' shared this faith in the power of human reason.....nothing was beyond improvement and nothing which did not advance human happiness was justifiable"* Was anything ever more in opposition to the Scripture of truth? The Chronicle continues *"Humanity guided by reason had an innate desire to do good and be happy: the apostles of the enlightenment had little time for schemes where people spent their lives fulfilling the arbitrary commands of a stern God or for barbaric notions like original sin. Virtue was now to be its own reward."*

This is the philosophy which governs the thinking of millions. Self firmly in the centre, everything for the benefit of humanity and anything which places "commands" which may affect human happiness is tossed on one side. It is the way in which the churches have moved in an effort to be popular with the people; truth is not an element in the equation and the words of the Holy one of Israel are rejected. These unclean spirits like frogs are described in verse 14 as "spirits of devils, working miracles" . Those in the gospels who were possessed with devils were in some way insane, they were unable to think rationally and the same applies today to the millions who are deceived by these false humanist ideas that man is in control and will eventually solve all his problems.

It is Jeremiah who says "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: all the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad." The latter day Babylon, described in Rev.16:13-14 as the false prophet is also instrumental in deceiving the nations and causing them to fight against Christ when he returns. It is not however alone, for three powers are mentioned in verse 13.

### **The dragon, the beast and the false prophet**

The dragon has been identified as the Pagan Roman power who turned "Christian" in the days of Constantine who then moved his capital from Rome to Constantinople naming it "Nova Roma". Constantinople thus became the second Rome. Rome still remained the religious capital of the empire but a fierce argument over the use of images resulted in a rift between Rome and Constantinople and so the "Greek Orthodox Church" was formed in the east. When Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453 the church there moved to Moscow as the Turks were Moslem; Moscow was then described as the third Rome. This is why Russia is identified on the main chart as the latter day dragon. Ezekiel 38 confirms that Russia will be in the confederacy of nations who will fight Christ in the battle of Armageddon. Russian leaders have not hidden their belief that they are the rightful occupiers of Constantinople (Istanbul). This will put Russia firmly in the seat of the dragon of old in the days of Constantine and his successors.

The beast has been identified with the Western part of the Roman Empire in the form of the beast of the sea and then the beast of the earth. The sixth vial therefore describes the whole of Europe in concert with the papacy as the mouthpiece of these unclean spirits like frogs who gather the kings of the Roman earth and the whole world to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. This is exactly what is emerging in Europe today; its destruction is the subject of Rev. 17 & 18 and will be considered in the next article.

### (3) Armageddon

"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon". (v.16) The gathering together here relates to the gathering together of verse 14. ie The battle of the great day of God Almighty. A number of suggestions have been made in attempt to understand the meaning of this Hebrew word. Part of the difficulty here is due to the fact three languages are involved; The word is taken from Hebrew, the New Testament is written in Greek which has been translated into English. The explanation given here is an interpretation which is supported by a number of other prophecies connected with the great day of God Almighty. The word is a compilation of three Hebrew words as the chart shows, also shown are the numbers in Strongs concordance and examples of where the three words are used elsewhere in Scripture.

	Hebrew	Strong	Meaning	Used
Arma	Arama	6194	Heap of corn	Neh.13:15
ge	Gai	1516	Valley	Jer.7:32
don	Dun	1779	Judgment	Prov.20:8

The idea of sheaves of corn awaiting threshing in the valley of judgment as a symbol of God's latter day judgments on the nations is well supported in the Old Testament Eg Micah 4:1-3 & 13, Joel 3:1-2 & 12-17, Ezekiel 38:18-23 & 39:4-11 Daniel 2:35 & 44 Isaiah 17:13 & 18:4-6. Some of these passages indicate the battle will be centered on the valley of Jehoshaphat (God will judge) to the east of Jerusalem.

### The seventh vial (Rev.17:17-21)

"And the seventh vial poured out his vial into the air" The word 'air' appears in Eph.2:2 where Paul reminds the believers they once walked according to the prince of the power of the air but they now sit with Christ; he is describing the rulers and the whole system of the world. The seventh vial is released into this system to bring about its destruction. John saw the result as the third 'great' earthquake in the Apocalypse which symbolises the end of human rule on the earth and the establishment of the righteous rule of Christ and the saints. This event will cause even the momentous events of the changing of the Roman world from Pagan to 'Christian rulership and the events of the French Revolution to pale into insignificance as verse 18 describes. A literal earthquake will also take place at this time as Ezekiel 38, Zech. 14, and Isaiah 30 foretell.

The great city Babylon is singled out for particular judgment; this will be considered in the next article as its destruction is described in more detail in chapter 18. The reader may remember the symbolic city of Babylon was identified as the Roman empire in chapter 11 (article 6) The three parts of the city most likely refer to the seat of the Dragon, the beast and the false prophet

mentioned in verse 13, these being Russia in control of Constantinople, Eastern Europe and Italy respectively.

Verse 20 mentions "every Island" fleeing away. A reference to other world powers not directly involved in the warfare between Europe and its invincible foe, they flee away from becoming involved and will eventually accept the laws of the all powerful ruler established in Jerusalem. Similarly the great rulers symbolised by the mountains are not to be found as the stone which was rejected at his first advent becomes "a great mountain" and fills the whole earth. (Dan.2:35) The great hail of verse 21 is another reference to divine judgment, see notes on the first trumpet (article 4) As on previous occasions, these judgments do not bring men to repentance and acknowledging the God of heaven but rather to blaspheme his name; this is why they are destroyed.

### **I come as a thief**

This warning is interjected at verse 15 during the events of the sixth vial. i.e. Today. The Lord will take many by surprise, even amongst those who should be watching. He gives the same warning in the Olivet prophecy. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged (weighed down) with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" (Luke 21:34) How relevant the warning is to disciples today, the Lord pinpoints three causes of being unprepared. (1) Surfeiting, too many things to distract (2) Drunkenness, He speaks to disciples and must therefore refer to spiritual drunkenness, inability to rightly divide the word, including prophecy. (3) The cares of this life, the pressures of modern life often threaten to engulf those who are determined to do well in this life. Along with the warning comes a blessing for those who heed it. "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame"

Are we watching? is the question we must all ask. Are we awake and vigilant to the things which are eternal? Are we keeping our garments unspotted from the world? This wonderful prophecy reminds us so powerfully that the things of the world are about to vanish away and if we have any regard for them we may perish as did Lot's wife.

May all our lamps be burning  
Our loins well girded be  
Each longing heart preparing  
With joy to welcome thee.

The content of this article concerns mainly the destruction of 'Babylon' as described in Revelation chapters 17 & 18. The events presented here are in the future as the Apocalyptic Babylon will not be destroyed until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 16 reveals this fact in verse 19 which is describing the events of the seventh vial. "great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath". Note Babylon is described as a woman, she is the main subject of chapter 17 which states in verse 18 "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city {Babylon}, which reigneth over the kings of the earth". The destruction of the city is then described in the next chapter (ch.18). Chapter 17 and 18 are therefore an expansion of ch.16:19.

This event is a matter for great rejoicing, not because of the suffering and destruction of many people but as a result of the removal of the great power which has deceived countless millions by making them believe a lie. The great enemy of truth, 'Babylon' or 'the whore' is no more; 'Jerusalem' or 'the Bride, the Lambs wife' has been redeemed through the blood of the Lamb. After the events recorded in chapters 17 & 18 John hears a voice in heaven saying , "Alleluia; Salvation, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." (Ch.19:1-2)

The main subjects of chapter 17 are the whore, and the beast she rides or controls. The distinction has already been made between the whore who commits adultery with the kings of the earth and the espoused bride who remains faithful to Christ: this helps to identify the whore as a power willing to 'do deals' with the kings of the earth at the expense of purity and truth. It is worth repeating the comments made in article 7, that this wicked apostate system was formed originally from the first century ecclesias. Warnings made by the apostles about false doctrines gradually entering and corrupting the ecclesias were ignored; by the early fourth century the church was prophetically described as an unfaithful woman (not yet a whore) about to give birth to a "child of sin". This child symbolised Constantine and the system he created, paganised Christianity in a position of power; the Christians were willing to abandon both the doctrines and the practices taught by Christ in an effort to gain power and influence the emperor. As in Eden the woman should have been subject to her husband, but she fell foul of the power of sin which caused her to usurp the authority and power which was not hers at that stage. The faithful bride will be given authority and power in God's good time, "To him that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev.26-27). In Rev.17 what was once the bride of Christ is described as a whore riding the scarlet beast. It has committed fornication with many kings and is in a position of power. The woman represents the religious power (The Papacy) while the beast typifies the political system (Europe) which is being manipulated by the woman. This beast is a latter day version of the beasts in Rev.13 and the fourth beast of Daniel 7 which is undoubtedly Roman. The table below shows the similarities.

Identifying feature	Fourth beast of Daniel 7	Scarlet beast of Rev. 17
10 Horns	v.7	v.3
Persecutes the saints	v.21	v.6
Blasphemes God	v.8 & 25	v.3
Judged at the establishment of the kingdom	v.22	v.14
Saints assist destruction	v.22	v.14
Destroyed by flames	v.12	19:20

The "great whore" sits "upon many waters" (17:1). Verse 15 of the same chapter explains the symbology here "The waters which thou sawest , where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues". The kings of the earth have committed fornication with the whore and are "drunk with the wine of her fornication" (v.2). The word of God is likened to bread, wine and milk. (Isa.55:1-3) When rightly divided the pure wine of the word "maketh glad the heart", but when mixed with the false teachings of Rome, it contains the same mixture of truth and error which the serpent used in Eden and flesh has used ever since. Regarding

Babylon, of which Rome is a latter day manifestation, Jeremiah says "the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad". Wine of fornication therefore stands for the lethal mixture of truth and error which has been used by the church to deceive millions into thinking they will 'be saved' if the doctrines and the authority of the church are acknowledged. This gives the church power over the "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues".

### **Mother of harlots**

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (V.5) In the true gospel which was preached originally to Abraham, the divine plan was revealed in stages through Moses, the prophets, Christ and his apostles; the mystery was revealed. Rome has taken the gospel, polluted it and made it an unintelligible mystery. This process which started in the first century was described by the Apostle Paul as the "Mystery of Iniquity". It was in 1965 when the Pope addressed the 'World Council of Churches'; he opened his arms to welcome Protestants home. The gradual process of ecumenism is preparing the nations for the fulfilment of this prophecy

The woman was "drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs" (v.6). The saints who witnessed the corruption of the truth could not tolerate false teaching, for they were true to the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, these being based on Moses and the prophets. In order therefore to contrive its deadly mixture, many of the saints had to be removed by the church in a way designed to instill fear into the hearts of others.

### **The Beast that was**

As John wonders in amazement at the beast and its rider, the angel of the seventh vial gives him more information regarding the beast. It "was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition". (v.8) The angel reveals to John that the beast "was", it had existed in the past, that is in the period prior to the vials. John had seen this power before symbolised by the beasts of the sea and the earth recorded in Rev.13. The two horned earth beast has been identified as the Holy Roman Empire which existed until approx. 1800 A.D. when the two horns (Emperor and Pope) lost their power during the fourth and fifth vials. In chapter 17 then, this power was not in existence initially ("and is not") but it "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit". The first time the beast is mentioned in the Apocalypse, it ascends out of the bottomless pit and makes war with the saints (Ch.11:7). Here in chapter 17 the latter day manifestation of the same power emerges again from the same bottomless pit of Europe to make war again with the saints. On this occasion however the outcome of the war will be very different. This time the beast and the whore will not be the victor, for the Lamb will be with the saints as verse 14 records. The fate of the beast will be utter destruction (v.8)

### **Seven heads**

In Jeremiah 51:25 Babylon is described as a destroying mountain; in Rev.17, the seven heads of the beast are described as the seven mountains of the latter day Babylon, it should also be noted

that Rome is built on seven hills. The reader may remember that in article 8 the seven heads on the earth beast in Rev.13 were identified as the seven forms of government, each of which, in its turn had controlled the Roman empire. John is given a link here in verse ten; "And there are seven kings" (forms of government): five are fallen, and one is," (Rome was under the imperial form of government when John received the vision) "and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." After John's day Rome was ruled by the Goths for the "short space" of 60 years.

In verse 11 John is told that the "beast that was, and is not" (the latter day beast described in verse 8) "even he is the eighth, and is of the seven". This links this beast with the Holy Roman Empire again which controlled the empire after the Goths ie it was the eighth. The Holy Roman Empire was controlled by Emperor and Pope which makes it a revival of the sixth head which was imperial, ie it was "of the seven". As already mentioned the scarlet beast of Rev.17 is the latter day manifestation of the Holy Roman Empire and can be seen developing in the earth today.

### **Ten Horns**

As seen before a horn is a symbol of power invested in an individual or a group of individuals. To give an example from Daniel Ch. 8, a great horn on the goat symbolised Alexander the great; when he died his kingdom was divided between his generals symbolised by the great horn being broken and four notable horns replacing it. Ten horns in Rev.17:12 give another link with ch.13 and the earth beast when the barbarian nations invaded and for a time controlled the empire. The controlling influence was shown in ch.13 as the horns being crowned; in ch.17 the horns are not crowned, but they do "receive power as kings one hour with the beast". The prophecy thus foretells of ten powers to arise in Europe who "give their power and strength to the beast" but at a later stage, having made war with the Lamb they destroy the whore to fulfil the purpose of God. (v.16-17) The whore will doubtless be the reason why the horns fight with the Lamb. The Roman Church teaches that a future anti-Christ will save the nation of Israel from a northern aggressor, the Papacy will therefore see Christ as a great enemy to be destroyed and will incite the rest of Europe to fight the King of Kings. Little wonder they will "hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked".

Concerning the "one hour" mentioned in verse 12, the Greek word 'hora' can mean a period of twenty four hours which in prophetic terms using day/year principle would be a period of one month. This does not seem very probable. The word 'hora' can also refer to a definite time or season. It is translated 'time' in Rev.14:15 which is dealing with the same event, namely the destruction of Babylon and the harvest of the wicked at the return of Christ. "Thrust in thy sickle, and reap for the time is come for thee to reap". Chapter 18 of the apocalypse which deals with the same event again describes the kings of the earth "saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come"

### **Babylon is fallen**

The meaning of the word 'Babylon' is confusion. The confusion started in Eden when the serpent blurred the issue by presenting Eve with a mixture of truth and error. It was a mixture which was

appealing to the flesh, the eyes and the pride of life; and it also resulted in deceiving Eve into believing a lie. From that day and onwards, these principles have been at work amongst the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve; from the fourth century and onwards they have been at work on a great and dreadful scale in the church of Rome. This system confuses countless millions and deceives them into believing the same lie "ye shall not surely die".

In 2 Thes.2:8 the apostle Paul declares concerning this wicked system "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming". This event is described in symbol in Rev.18 and will be considered here under four headings:-

### **1. I sit a queen**

The Papacy has survived the first six vials, it was however stripped of its power and in a sense made a widow. It is now gradually regaining that power both politically and in the role of being the 'Mother Church' of all Christendom. Judgment administered by Christ will come as a surprise. It will be complete and will take place quickly

### **2. The merchants of the earth**

The merchandise or trading for gain of the Papacy has always been in exchange for the souls of men & women. The clerics of Rome have taken the wisdom which leads to everlasting life, perverted it and made gain from their false teachings. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise (gain) of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her" (Prov.3:13-17) These unspeakable riches are a free gift "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. .... Incline your ear, and come to me: hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (Isa.55:1&3)

Peter speaks of the false teachers in the first century whose teachings eventually resulted in the establishment of the Roman church, he warns that "many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you" (2 Peter 2:2-3) The free gift of everlasting life has been taken from those who have been deceived by the "feigned words" of those who make gain in the process. The word 'feigned' means moulded, indicating how the true word has been manipulated and moulded to suit the greedy desires of the trader. Trading in literal silver and gold etc is also a feature of the Catholic church due to its riches gained often from those who are poor in this worlds goods. Both literal and 'spiritual' trading are referred to in chapter 18.

## **The Kings of the earth**

There are kings of the earth who survive the destruction of Rome. They were willing in times past to take part in the evil practices of the church; but now they "stand afar off". They dare not show any further allegiance to Rome.

## **All nations have drunk**

Old Testament prophets warned Israel to beware of the doctrines of the surrounding nations and particularly Babylon as they were affecting the rulers of God's chosen people. "Stay yourselves and wonder: cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed" (Isa.29:9-11) Because the rulers and many of the people wanted to hear "smooth things" and "deceit" rather than hear the truth, God gave them their desire. Jeremiah adds "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken:: all the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her...." (Jer.51:7-8) The latter day Babylon has done exactly the same in deceiving millions from the nations into believing a lie. It will also meet a sudden destruction as Rev.18 shows.

## **The blood of the prophets**

"In her was found the blood of the prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (18:24) Those not deceived by the counterfeit teachings of Rome and her daughters were under an obligation to warn others of the consequences of following the teaching of the serpent. This has led to persecution in many terrible forms at the hands of the Catholics. Hence the rejoicing mentioned in verse 20, the great enemy of Gods people is destroyed, Babylon is no more, Jerusalem is victorious.

This article will look briefly at Rev. Chapters 19 & 20. These two chapters deal with three main subjects, these being the true and righteous judgment of God to establish his kingdom on the earth, the marriage of the Lamb to his faithful bride, and some details about the millennium.

## **True and Righteous are his Judgments**

Chapter 19 begins with a vision of "much people in heaven" praising God for his "true and righteous judgments". This vision will become a reality when the saints of all ages unite in the glorious praise of the Father and the Son. The reasons for the rejoicing are twofold, both relating to the symbolic women of the apocalypse; the great whore is destroyed and the bride has made herself ready for the joyful union with the Lamb. These are the results of the true and righteous judgments of almighty God. The destruction of the great whore, also symbolically described as Babylon was considered in the last article, now is the time to think about the marriage of the Lamb.

The Apostle Paul declares to the believers in Corinth (2 Cor.11:2) "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ". However, He continues in the following verse "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty,

so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus ..... another spirit ..... another gospel .... ye might well bear with him". A remnant remained faithful to the teaching of Jesus and the apostles but sadly the majority listened to 'another gospel' based on fleshly thinking; this resulted in an apostate church and eventually the whore of Rev.17 - 19. Every church or individual to whom the apostle Paul wrote with the exception of Philemon the warning is given to beware of false teaching from outside and from within the ecclesias. The thinking of the flesh has not changed, and the warning applies as much to the twentieth century as it did to the first.

### **His wife hath made herself ready**

Those who have been beguiled by the reasoning of the serpent and have so often persecuted the faithful remnant are now destroyed; the bride however, who has remained faithful to the faithful and true witness is now united to her redeemer. The voice of the great multitude is heard to say "Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready". The point is inferred that the bride is not ready through her own righteousness or faithfulness, for the honour is given 'to him'. "It displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor ; therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." (Isa.59:15-16) The preparedness of the bride is attributed firstly to him who gave his only begotten Son, secondly to the obedience of his Son, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and thirdly to the faithfulness of the bride. "Christ is the head of the church : and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing". As the Son was subject to the Father, so the ecclesia is subject to Christ. "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." (Rev.14:4)

The marriage of the Lamb will be a time of unspeakable joy, for the Father, for the Bridegroom and the Bride. The Father was displeased that there was no judgment, but concerning the Son he said "Behold my servant whom I uphold: mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles" (Isa.42:1). What greater joy could there be for the father than to see his only begotten Son united with the Bride he has redeemed with his own blood. For the Son who is "the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross". "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied". And for the Bride, the long struggle against sin will be over and the victory will be won. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps.126:5-6) This rejoicing will begin with the marriage supper of the Lamb.

### **A white horse in heaven**

Verse 11 of chapter 19 begins another scene in John's visions; he sees a white horse whose rider is called "faithful and true". This must be the Lord Jesus Christ who is the faithful and true witness (ch.3:14), his white horse represents the righteousness which will result in peace. A similar symbol is seen in chapter 6:2 where the righteousness and peace were short lived; the white horse here was followed by a red horse and then a black horse. In chapter 19 the rider on

the white horse is followed by an army on white horses "clothed in linen clean and white". These represent glorified saints "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb" (ch.7:14) "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" (ch.19:8)

### **In righteousness he doth judge and make war**

Peace cannot prevail until the enemies are destroyed and for the peace to last this must be done in righteousness. The subsequent details of this vision reveal it to relate to chapter 17:14, the vision is an expansion of this verse which speaks of the war between Christ and the saints on one side; his enemies which include the whore with the beast and its followers on the other. "His eyes were as a flame of fire" (v.12) indicating the destruction of the foe. Paul informs the Thessalonians "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ..... When he shall come to be glorified in his saints". A sharp sword proceeds from his mouth indicating that with "the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked" (Isa.11:4). He treads the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of almighty God and his name is King of kings and Lord of Lords.

### **The Supper of the Great God**

From verse 17 to the end of chapter 19 is described another supper distinct from the marriage supper of the Lamb. This is a supper at which the fowls of heaven are invited to eat the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men and horses. The symbol is used elsewhere in scripture; concerning the destruction and scattering of Israel Deuteronomy 28:26 records "And thy carcase shall be meat unto the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away". The demise of Egypt is described in a similar way in Ezekiel 29:5 and the destruction of Gog in Ezekiel 39:17. This supper is an invitation to mortal rulers and people who submit to Christ to assist in the destruction of nations who resist. Foremost in the latter group is the beast, the kings of the earth and the false prophet (19:20). The final deception by the false prophet will be to cause the beast and the kings of the earth to fight against the King of Kings; the Pope will proclaim him to be 'anti-Christ'. The Catholic church teaches that anti-Christ will appear in Jerusalem and call on the nations to submit to his rule. This belief is shared by many Protestant churches.

The beast and the false prophet will be destroyed completely, John sees them "cast alive into a lake burning with fire and brimstone" (19:20) Being cast "alive" into the lake suggests many are raised from the dead in order to receive this judgment. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day". (John 12:48) Rev.19:13 declares "his name is called The Word of God" whilst verse 15 states "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations".

### **Satan bound 1000 years**

Revelation 20 follows on from the previous chapter; it deals with the millennial reign of Christ and the saints. The Beast and the False Prophet have been destroyed but "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan"; although bound is still in existence. Sin has not been

completely destroyed. This accords with Old Testament teaching; Isaiah for example speaks of the same time when he says "the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed". In chapter 11 the beast ascends from the bottomless pit to make war with the saints, but here in chapter 20 the dragon is bound in the bottomless pit. This pit of the abyss as seen on previous occasions represents the mortal nations. Sin is still among the mortals but unable to influence and deceive until the end of the thousand years.

The question may be asked, why is this 1000 year period taken literally when for other time periods in the Apocalypse the day/year formula is used? The simple answer to the question is that a literal 1000 years is in harmony with the rest of scripture. The millennial reign of Christ is called the Sabbath rest in Hebrews 3 & 4. Genesis records God resting on the seventh day after the six days of creation. The father has been working for six thousand years to redeem man to himself; the next thousand years in the millennium will be the rest prepared for those who love the Father and his Son. "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest". (Heb.4:11) In verse 4 John sees the saints sitting on thrones of judgment, they "had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years". This will be the fulfilment of the promise given in chapter 2:26 "And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end will I give power over the nations".

### **The rest of the dead**

Verse 5 speaks about "the rest of the dead" they "lived not again until the thousand years were finished". To whom does this refer? It cannot be those who lived before the return of Christ to the earth as they have already been resurrected and judged by Christ at his return; they either live with Christ or they have been rejected and have been condemned to death. Those referred to in verse 5 must be mortals who have died during the millennium. They do not live again until the final judgment at the end of the millennium mentioned in verse 12.

A blessing follows for those who "have part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power". This is referring to the saints, as it follows on from verse 4; it means more than being present at the first resurrection as some of this group are not blessed but cursed. The judge will say to some "depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mat.25:41); their destruction will be complete. To those who have part in the first resurrection the judge will say "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat.25:34). "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years"; and after that, when the second death occurs at the end of the millennium they will not be hurt, but "God himself shall be with them, and be their God". (Rev.21:3)

The scriptures speak of this glorious reign of Christ and the saints. For the mortal population it will be a time to learn of righteousness which will result in peace. They will go to Jerusalem to be taught of his ways and walk in his paths. For those who live and reign with Christ; they will be like the angels, no longer prone to sin and death. "These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God". What a prospect! They were once strangers scattered

among all nations, but now they reign with Christ and they inherit the kingdom promised from the foundation of the world..

### **Satan loosed from Prison**

At the end of the thousand years, "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison" (v.7) ; this is Satan's final hour, sin is in its death throws. This is the time when "the last enemy" will be destroyed. For the last time Satan will practise deception; the first time it deceived was in Eden when it challenged the authority of God's word; it resulted in death and has done ever since. As a result of this final deception there are mortals who believe they cannot only challenge the authority of Christ and the saints but destroy them. They "compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" (v.9). Here is proof indeed that human nature is not fit to live for ever and that the divine sentence of death in Eden was correct. The mortals in the millennium will have enjoyed the untold blessing of righteous government, resulting in peace and prosperity. When the divinely imposed authority is relaxed and Satan is "loosed for a little season", the rebellion is on an international scale.

### **The Nations Deceived**

"And he shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." (v.8) The language here might suggest the same incident as recorded in Ezekiel 38. This however cannot be the case, the table shows some of the differences between the two events.

Ezekiel 38	Revelation 20
Nations involved only from Europe, Middle East, North Africa etc.	Nations from "the four quarters of the earth"
They come against "the desolate places that are now inhabited"	In the millennium Israel shall "rejoice and blossoms the rose"
This results in God being "known in the eyes of many nations and they shall know that I an the LORD" This results in God being "known in the eyes of many nations and they shall know that I am the LORD"	All nations will have known God is the LORD for the previous 1000 years
The house of Israel will know "that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward"	Israel will have known this for 1000 years

This final rebellion is short lived, they are devoured by fire from God out of heaven. The destruction is complete, for that old serpent, the Devil and Satan is symbolically thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone. The reminder is added that this is where the beast and the false prophet already reside. The phrase at the end of verse 10 "and shall be tormented day and night for ever" has lead to misunderstanding as to the nature of the destruction. Many see this as the everlasting hell fire believed to be the final home of the wicked. It helps to remember that the lake of fire and brimstone is not literal but a symbol of complete destruction. Sodom and Gomorrah were literal cities that suffered "the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). These cities are not still burning but their destruction was complete; this is what the phrase means.

## **The Great White Throne**

The final scene in chapter 10:11-15 describe the final resurrection and judgment at the end of the thousand years. This will remove everything that offends God and prepare the earth for the time spoken of by Paul "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." (1 Cor.15:24) The white throne symbolises the righteous judgments of the Lord Jesus Christ who sits on it. From him "earth and heaven flee away" A reference possibly to the leaders of the final rebellion and their followers who have either survived the destruction of verse 9 or who have been raised for the purpose of judgment.

After this resurrection of the mortals who have lived during the millennium and their judgment John is told that "death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Death will be "swallowed up in victory". The wondrous work of Israel's Messiah will be complete in both phases: the first phase when he died upon the cross saying "it is finished" and the second when he hands over the perfected Kingdom to the Father.

This article will consider the last two chapters in the Apocalypse. Here is contained the vision given to John of the post millennial phase of the kingdom when God will dwell with men; when the earth will be filled with his glory and every trace of rebellion is banished.

## **A new heaven and earth**

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea." (Rev. 21:1) The heaven and earth are obviously not literal because they will not "pass away". The Psalmist speaking of the literal heavens declares in Psalm 148 "He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass." A symbolic heaven and earth were addressed by Moses in Deut. 32:1 "Give ear, O ye heavens and I will speak: and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth". Moses here is speaking to the leaders of the nation (heavens) and also the people of the nation (the earth). The millennial reign of Christ and the saints is described in the same way in Isa.51:16 and 65:17; "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Here in Rev.21, a new order is being described when Christ "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the father" (1 Cor.15:24).

In this new order John learns that there will be no nations; this is shown in symbol when he is told "there was no more sea". Nations did exist in the millennium, due to the righteous rule of Christ and the saints they were no longer in turmoil ("the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest" Isa.57:20) but at peace. "And I saw .... them that had gotten the victory ... stand on the sea of glass" (Rev.15:2). The symbolism describes the saints ruling over the nations. Beyond the millennium however, there is only one nation; it is the true Israel of God; "though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee". (Jer.33:11)

## **New Jerusalem**

The attention of the apostle is next absorbed by a vision of glory and beauty. It is a vision of the faithful saints of all ages, now joined by the mortals from the millennial age who have been

granted immortality at the final judgment. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband". The contrast between this and the other symbolic city in the apocalypse could not be sharper; this is why Babylon is annihilated and Jerusalem is victorious. This city is from God, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled to himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor.5:18); "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! ..... For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to him be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom.11:33 & 36)

The city is prepared as a bride to meet her husband, is this husband Christ or is it God himself? The latter would seem to be correct. The marriage of the lamb takes place at the return of Christ when he is united with the saints. Here in chapter 21 is the time when the redeemed are united with their maker. "For thy maker is thy husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called." (Isa.54:5) The vision amplifies this very point "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God". The last enemy has been destroyed, all that remains is of God and he is all and in all. Those who are there have overcome, it was Jesus who said to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world". (Jn.16:33) His victory will lead a great multitude to glory, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith". (1 Jn.5:4)

Those who are not "born of God" are excluded. They are described inverse 9; "the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars". These are destroyed of the "second death"; a reference here to the final death at the end of the millennium.

### **I will shew thee the bride**

Verse nine introduces a new scene, John is taken as it were back in time (into the millennium) to consider how the events described in the first eight verses were achieved. This principle is used throughout the apocalypse. It is one of the vial angels who speaks with John, presumably the angel of the seventh vial, for he speaks of the "bride, the Lambs wife". The angel who told John of the destruction of the whore (17:1) now tells him more about the glorified bride. Much of the details regarding the destruction of the whore are given when describing the destruction of the symbolic city of Babylon. The glories of the bride are now given with a consideration of the other symbolic city in the apocalypse, "that great city, the holy Jerusalem"

As with all symbols in scripture, the symbol is based on the literal. The city and the temple will literally exist, they are described by Ezekiel in chapters 40 - 48 and many similarities exist between the literal and symbolic.

The city is measured by the angel with a "golden reed" (v.15) . Gold being a symbol of tried faith shows that those who comprise this city do so because of their faith which had been tested in the days of their flesh. The apocalypse speaks of this in chapter 11:1 when the temple of God is measured with a rod of affliction. The city is described as "Having the glory of God (v.11); Paul states of Christ in Rom.5:2-4 "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we

stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience: and experience, hope"

### The wall of the city

The four walls each had three gates as in the city seen by Ezekiel in chapter 48. Here Ezekiel is told that "the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel". Back in Rev.21 the symbology is showing that the only way to enter this city is to take a firm hold on the Hope of Israel. This is further amplified by a consideration of the foundations of the walls of the city. Concerning those who "feared the LORD" Malachi adds "And they shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels". The chart links the jewels or precious stones used in the foundations of the walls with the tribes of Israel listed in Rev.7 when the faithful are sealed.

Precious Stone	Tribe	Meaning of name (Gen.29 etc)
Jasper	Judah	Praise
Sapphire	Reuben	See, a son
Chalcedony	Gad	A company
Emerald	Aser	Happy
Sardonyx	Nephtalim	Wrestling
Sardius	Manasses	Forgetting
Chrysolyte	Simeon	Hearing
Beryl	Levi	Joined
Topaz	Issachar	Reward
Chrysoprasus	Zabulon	Dwelling
Jacinth	Joseph	Adding
Amethyst	Benjamin	Son of the right hand

Taking the meaning of the names, the following message has been suggested which describes the strivings of the faithful to become part of this glorious city. *'Praise the son in the company of the blessed, who after wrestling with sin and forgetting the flesh, have heard and joined Him who has rewarded them, and now dwells with them, thus adding to the son of the right hand.*

### I saw no temple therein

John relates in verse 22 that no temple exists in this symbolic city, why is this? The purpose of a temple is to facilitate the worship of God in an environment which is separate from sin. This is not required amongst this community represented by the city, the whole city is in fact a temple anyway. This is a glorified people who reflect the glory of the Lord God and the Lamb as the verse shows. Verse 23 continues in the same vane "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

## **The Nations**

The nations are still in existence, they are mentioned in verse 24 and again in verse 26. They are no longer like the troubled sea, casting up mire and dirt (Isa.57:20). Because sin is restrained, they are at rest; the sea of glass John saw in the vision of Rev.15. The nations now walk in the light of the city. They no longer grope in the darkness of their own imaginations; they have a government which can perfectly reflect the light and glory of God and the Lamb. The nations therefore respond by bringing their glory and honour to the city. In other words, the earth is full of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

## **A pure river of water of life**

Again the symbol is based on the literal. Ezekiel speaks in chapter 47 of a river which will issue from the temple and give life to the dead sea in the millennium. More important will be the river of water of life which issues from Christ and the saints. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Christ said this to the disciples who were to receive the Holy Spirit which would enable them to teach men of many nations "the wonderful works of God". It will be the privilege of the saints to teach all nations the wonderful works of God. The scripture from which the Master quoted was Isaiah 12:3 "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation". The prophet continues "And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy one of Israel in the midst of thee.

## **The tree (wood) of life**

Yet another symbol based on the literal. "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." (Ezek.47:12) The trees give life because of the waters. Psalm 1 speaks of the man that delights in the law of the LORD. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" As John states "the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. This is also true in the natural world, it is the action of the sun upon the leaves which turns the carbon-di-oxide produced by man and animals into life-giving oxygen. So in the millennium; the work of "the Sun of righteousness" acting through the saints will bring light and life to the nations.

## **No more curse**

Verse 3 cannot relate to the nations mentioned in the previous verse, they are mortal. Isaiah speaks of the nations during the millennium, "but the sinner being an hundred years old shall die accursed" The phrase "no more curse" must apply to the saints who constitute the new Jerusalem; this is where the throne of God, and the Lamb are. For them the curse of Eden is

removed and they have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs ...." (vs.14-15)

### **I come quickly**

The concluding section of the Apocalypse from verse 7 to the end of the chapter gives this warning three times, what does it mean? It is obviously not saying the Lord Jesus Christ was about to appear in the first century when John received the vision. A message given to Habakkuk may be helpful here; "For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end - it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay". (Hab.2:3 RSV) This is true of the Apocalypse, although it hastens to the end there must have been many who were weary with waiting for God to act. Those for example during the period of the fifth seal early in the fourth century who cried "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

It is noteworthy that the only other mention in the Apocalypse outwith the letters to the ecclesias of the Lord coming quickly is in chapter 16, during the period of the sixth vial, that is, now! "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame"

### **Are we ready?**

The distinction is made in Rev.20:11 between those who are ready and those who are not. Those not ready are described as being unjust and filthy. To be unjust is to be not right with God. A few verses selected from Psalm 78 illustrate the principle. "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel" (v.5). "That they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (v.7) "they believed not in God, and trusted not his salvation" (v.22). "For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant" (v.37). Their heart was not right with God because they believed him not, nor trusted in his salvation. When the Master returns those whose heart is "not right" with God will remain that way.

By contrast, "he that is righteous, let him be righteous still" (Rev.20:11). The second time the word righteous is used it has a different meaning ie 'to be made right'. For those who display the righteousness of faith now will be given true righteousness then. The same applies to the next phrase in the verse, "and he that is holy let him be holy" (to be made holy). If we strive to be separate from the world now, when the Lord returns we shall be changed and made holy indeed.

The last article in this series will briefly consider the kingdom visions given to John and draw some final conclusions regarding this wonderful prophecy.